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THE

WORKS OF CHARLES KINGSLEY.

VOLUME III.

ALTON LOCKE.

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VOLUME III.

ALTON LOCKE.

London:
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1882.

ALTON LOCKE,

TAILOR AND POET.

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An Autobiography.

BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

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WITH A PREFATORY MEMOIR

BY

THOMAS HUGHES, Esq., Q.C.,

Author of "Tom Brown's Schooldays."

AND A PORTRAIT, ENGRAVED BY C. H. JEENS.

NEW EDITION.

HM·d 4

London:
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1882.

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PREFATORY MEMOIR.

THE tract appended to this preface has been chosen to accompany this reprint of *Alton Locke* in order to illustrate, from another side, a distinct period in the life of Charles Kingsley, which stands out very much by itself. It may be taken roughly to have extended from 1848 to 1856. It has been thought that they require a preface, and I have undertaken to write it, as one of the few survivors of those who were most intimately associated with the author at the time to which the works refer.

No easy task; for, look at them from what point we will, these years must be allowed to cover an anxious and critical time in modern English history; but, above all, in the history of the working classes. In the first of them the Chartist agitation came to a head and burst, and was followed by the great movement towards association, which, developing in two directions and by two distinct methods—represented respectively by the amalgamated Trades Unions, and Co-operative Societies—has in the intervening years entirely changed the conditions of the labour question in England, and the relations of the working to the upper and middle classes. It is with this, the social and industrial side of the history of those years, that we are mainly concerned here.

Charles Kingsley has left other and more important writings of those years. But these are beside our purpose, which is to give some such slight sketch of him as may be possible within the limits of a preface, in the character in which he was first widely known, as the most outspoken and powerful of those who took the side of the labouring classes, at a critical time—the crisis in a word, when they abandoned their old political weapons, for the more potent one of union and association, which has since carried them so far.

To no one of all those to whom his memory is very dear can this seem a superfluous task, for no writer was ever more misunderstood or better abused at the time, and after the lapse of almost a quarter of a century the misunderstanding would seem still to hold its ground. For through all the many notices of him which appeared after his death in last January, there ran the same apologetic tone as to this part of his life's work. While generally, and as a rule cordially, recognizing his merits as an author and a man, the writers seemed to agree in passing lightly over this ground. When it was touched it was in a tone of apology, sometimes tinged with sarcasm, as in the curt notice in the "Times"—"He was understood, to be the Parson Lot of those 'Politics for the People' which made no little noise in their time, and as Parson Lot he declared in burning language that to his mind the fault in the 'People's Charter' was that it did not go nearly far enough." And so the writer turns away, as do most of his brethren, leaving probably some such impression as this on the minds of most of their readers—"Young men of power and genius are apt to start with wild notions. He was no exception. Parson Lot's sayings and doings may well be pardoned for what Charles Kingsley said and did in after years; so let us drop a decent curtain over them, and pass on."

Now, as very nearly a generation has passed since that signature used to appear at the foot of some of the most noble and vigorous writing of our time, readers of to-day are not unlikely to accept this view, and so to

find further confirmation and encouragement in the example of Parson Lot for the mischievous and cowardly distrust of anything like enthusiasm amongst young men, already sadly too prevalent in England. If it were only as a protest against this "surtout point de zèle" spirit, against which it was one of Charles Kingsley's chief tasks to fight with all his strength, it is well that the facts should be set right. This done, readers may safely be left to judge what need there is for the apologetic tone in connection with the name, the sayings, and doings of Parson Lot.

My first meeting with him was in the autumn of 1848, at the house of Mr. Maurice, who had lately been appointed Reader of Lincolns Inn. No parochial work is attached to that post, so Mr. Maurice had undertaken the charge of a small district in the parish in which he lived, and had set a number of young men, chiefly students of the Inns of Court who had been attracted by his teaching, to work in it. Once a week, on Monday evenings, they used to meet at his house for tea, when their own work was reported upon and talked over. Suggestions were made and plans considered; and afterwards a chapter of the Bible was read and discussed. Friends and old pupils of Mr. Maurice's, residing in the country, or in distant parts of London, were in the habit of coming occasionally to these meetings, amongst whom was Charles Kingsley. He had been recently appointed Rector of Eversley, and was already well known as the author of *The Saint's Tragedy*, his first work, which contained the germ of much that he did afterwards.

His poem, and the high regard and admiration which Mr. Maurice had for him, made him a notable figure in that small society, and his presence was always eagerly looked for. What impressed me most about him when we first met was, his affectionate deference to Mr. Maurice, and the vigour and incisiveness of everything he said and did. He had the power of cutting out what he meant in a few clear words, beyond any one I have ever met. The next thing that struck one was the ease with which he could turn from playfulness, or even broad humour, to the

deepest earnest. At first I think this startled most persons, until they came to find out the real deep nature of the man; and that his broadest humour had its root in a faith which realized, with extraordinary vividness, the fact that God's Spirit is actively abroad in the world, and that Christ is in every man, and made him hold fast, even in his saddest moments,—and sad moments were not infrequent with him,—the assurance that, in spite of all appearances, the world was going right, and would go right somehow, "Not your way, or my way, but God's way." The contrast of his humility and audacity, of his distrust in himself and confidence in himself, was one of those puzzles which meet us daily in this world of paradox. But both qualities gave him a peculiar power for the work he had to do at that time, with which the name of Parson Lot is associated.

It was at one of these gatherings, towards the end of 1847 or early in 1848, when Kingsley found himself in a minority of one, that he said jokingly, he felt much as Lot must have felt in the Cities of the Plain, when he seemed as one that mocked to his sons-in-law. The name Parson Lot was then and there suggested, and adopted by him, as a familiar *nom de plume.* He used it from 1848 up to 1856; at first constantly, latterly much more rarely. But the name was chiefly made famous by his writings in "Politics for the People," the "Christian Socialist," and the "Journal of Association," three periodicals which covered the years from '48 to '52; by "Alton Locke"; and by tracts and pamphlets, of which the best known, "Cheap Clothes and Nasty," is now republished.

In order to understand and judge the sayings and writings of Parson Lot fairly, it is necessary to recall the condition of the England of that day. Through the winter of 1847-8, amidst wide-spread distress, the cloud of discontent, of which Chartism was the most violent symptom, had been growing darker and more menacing, while Ireland was only held down by main force. The breaking out of the revolution on the Continent in February increased the danger. In March there were riots in London,

Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, and other large towns. On April 7th, "the Crown and Government Security Bill," commonly called "the Gagging Act," was introduced by the Government, the first reading carried by 265 to 24, and the second a few days later by 452 to 35. On the 10th of April the Government had to fill London with troops, and put the Duke of Wellington in command, who barricaded the bridges and Downing Street, garrisoned the Bank and other public buildings, and closed the Horse Guards.

When the momentary crisis had passed, the old soldier declared in the House of Lords that "no great society had ever suffered as London had during the preceding days," while the Home Secretary telegraphed to all the chief magistrates of the kingdom the joyful news that the peace had been kept in London. In April, the Lord Chancellor, in introducing the Crown and Government Security Bill in the House of Lords, referred to the fact that "meetings were daily held, not only in London, but in most of the manufacturing towns, the avowed object of which was to array the people against the constituted authority of these realms." For months afterwards the Chartist movement, though plainly subsiding, kept the Government in constant anxiety; and again in June, the Bank, the Mint, the Custom House, and other public offices were filled with troops, and the Houses of Parliament were not only garrisoned but provisioned as if for a siege.

From that time, all fear of serious danger passed away. The Chartists were completely discouraged, and their leaders in prison; and the upper and middle classes were recovering rapidly from the alarm which had converted a million of them into special constables, and were beginning to doubt whether the crisis had been so serious after all, whether the disaffection had ever been more than skin deep. At this juncture a series of articles appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* on "London Labour and the London Poor," which startled the well-to-do classes out of their jubilant and scornful attitude, and disclosed a state of things which made all fair minded people wonder, not that there had

been violent speaking and some rioting, but that the metropolis had escaped the scenes which had lately been enacted in Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and other Continental capitals.

It is only by an effort that one can now realize the strain to which the nation was subjected during that winter and spring, and which, of course, tried every individual man also, according to the depth and earnestness of his political and social convictions and sympathies. The group of men who were working under Mr. Maurice were no exceptions to the rule. The work of teaching and visiting was not indeed neglected, but the larger questions which were being so strenuously mooted—the points of the people's charter, the right of public meeting, the attitude of the labouring class to the other classes—absorbed more and more of their attention. Kingsley was very deeply impressed with the gravity and danger of the crisis—more so, I think, than almost any of his friends; probably because, as a country parson, he was more directly in contact with one class of the poor than any of them. How deeply he felt for the agricultural poor, how faithfully he reflected the passionate and restless sadness of the time, may be read in the pages of "Yeast," which was then coming out in "Fraser." As the winter months went on this sadness increased, and seriously affected his health.

"I have a longing," he wrote to Mr. Ludlow, "to *do something*—what, God only knows. You say, 'he that believeth will not make haste,' but I think he that believeth *must* make haste, or get damned with the rest. But I will do anything that anybody likes—I have no confidence in myself or in anything but God. I am not great enough for such times, alas! '*nè pour faire des vers*,' as Camille Desmoulins said."

This longing became so strong as the crisis in April approached, that he came to London to see what could be done, and to get help from Mr. Maurice, and those whom he had been used to meet at his house. He found them a divided body. The majority were sworn in as special constables, and several had openly sided with the Chartists;

while he himself, with Mr. Maurice and Mr. Ludlow, were unable to take active part with either side. The following extract from a letter to his wife, written on the 9th of April, shows how he was employed during these days, and how he found the work which he was in search of, the first result of which was the publication of "those 'Politics for the People' which made no small noise in their times"—

"*April 11th*, 1848.—The events of a week have been crowded into a few hours. I was up till four this morning—writing posting placards, under Maurice's auspices, one of which is to be got out to-morrow morning, the rest when we can get money. Could you not beg a few sovereigns somewhere to help these poor wretches to the truest alms?—to words, texts from the Psalms, anything which may keep even one man from cutting his brother's throat to-morrow or Friday? *Pray, pray, help us.* Maurice has given me a highest proof of confidence. He has taken me to counsel, and we are to have meetings for prayer and study, when I come up to London, and we are to bring out a new set of real "Tracts for the Times," addressed to the higher orders. Maurice is *à la hauteur des circonstances*—determined to make a decisive move. He says, if the Oxford Tracts did wonders, why should not we? Pray for us. A glorious future is opening, and both Maurice and Ludlow seem to have driven away all my doubts and sorrow, and I see the blue sky again, and my Father's face!"

The arrangements for the publication of "Politics for the People" were soon made; and in one of the earliest numbers, for May, 1848, appeared the paper which furnishes what ground there is for the statement, already quoted, that "he declared, in burning language, that the People's Charter did not go far enough" It was No. I of "Parson Lot's Letters to the Chartists." Let us read it with its context.

"I am not one of those who laugh at your petition of the 10th of April: I have no patience with those who do. Suppose there were but 250,000 honest names on that sheet—suppose the Charter itself were all stuff—yet you have

still a right to fair play, a patient hearing, an honourable and courteous answer, whichever way it may be. But *my only quarrel with the Charter is that it does not go far enough in reform.* I want to see you *free*, but I do not see that what you ask for will give you what you want. I think you have fallen into just the same mistake as the rich, of whom you complain—the very mistake which has been our curse and our nightmare. I mean the mistake of fancying that *legislative* reform is *social* reform, or that men's hearts can be changed by Act of Parliament. If any one will tell me of a country where a Charter made the rogues honest, or the idle industrious, I will alter my opinion of the Charter, but not till then. It disappointed me bitterly when I read it. It seemed a harmless cry enough, but a poor, bald constitution-mongering cry as ever I heard. The French cry of 'organization of labour' is worth a thousand of it, but yet that does not go to the bottom of the matter by many a mile." And then, after telling how he went to buy a number of the Chartist newspaper, and found it in a shop which sold "flash songsters," "the Swell's Guide," and "dirty milksop French novels," and that these publications, and a work called "The Devil's Pulpit," were puffed in its columns, he goes on, "These are strange times. I thought the devil used to befriend tyrants and oppressors, but he seems to have profited by Burns' advice to 'tak a thought and mend.' I thought the struggling freeman's watchword was: 'God sees my wrongs.' 'He hath taken the matter into His own hands.' 'The poor committeth himself unto Him, for He is the helper of the friendless.' But now the devil seems all at once to have turned philanthropist and patriot, and to intend himself to fight the good cause, against which he has been fighting ever since Adam's time. I don't deny, my friends, it is much cheaper and pleasanter to be reformed by the devil than by God; for God will only reform society on the condition of our reforming every man his own self—while the devil is quite ready to help us to mend the laws and the parliament, earth and heaven, without ever starting such an impertinent and 'personal' request, as

that a man should mend himself. *That* liberty of the subject he will always respect."—"But I say honestly, whomsoever I may offend, the more I have read of your convention speeches and newspaper articles, the more I am convinced that too many of you are trying to do God's work with the devil's tools. What is the use of brilliant language about peace, and the majesty of order, and universal love, though it may all be printed in letters a foot long, when it runs in the same train with ferocity, railing, mad, one-eyed excitement, talking itself into a passion like a street woman? Do you fancy that after a whole column spent in stirring men up to fury, a few twaddling copybook headings about 'the sacred duty of order' will lay the storm again? What spirit is there but the devil's spirit in bloodthirsty threats of revenge?"—"I denounce the weapons which you have been deluded into employing to gain you your rights, and the indecency and profligacy which you are letting be mixed up with them! Will you strengthen and justify your enemies? Will you disgust and cripple your friends? Will you go out of your way to do wrong? When you can be free by fair means will you try foul? When you might keep the name of Liberty as spotless as the Heaven from which she comes, will you defile her with blasphemy, beastliness, and blood? When the cause of the poor is the cause of Almighty God, will you take it out of His hands to entrust it to the devil? These are bitter questions, but as you answer them so will you prosper."

In Letter II. he tells them that if they have followed a different "Reformer's Guide" from his, it is "mainly the fault of us parsons, who have never told you that the true 'Reformer's Guide,' the true poor man's book, the true 'Voice of God against tyrants, idlers, and humbugs, was the Bible.' The Bible demands for the poor as much, and more, than they demand for themselves; it expresses the deepest yearnings of the poor man's heart far more nobly, more searchingly, more daringly, more eloquently than any modern orator has done. I say, it gives a ray of hope—say rather a certain dawn of a glorious future,

such as no universal suffrage, free trade, communism, organization of labour, or any other Morrison's-pill-measure can give—and yet of a future, which will embrace all that is good in these—a future of conscience, of justice, of freedom, when idlers and oppressors shall no more dare to plead parchments and Acts of Parliament for their iniquities. I say the Bible promises this, not in a few places only, but throughout; it is the thought which runs through the whole Bible, justice from God to those whom men oppress, glory from God to those whom men despise. Does that look like the invention of tyrants, and prelates? You may sneer, but give me a fair hearing, and if I do not prove my words, then call me the same hard name which I shall call any man, who having read the Bible, denies that it is the poor man's comfort and the rich man's warning."

In subsequent numbers (as afterwards in the "Christian Socialist," and the "Journal of Association") he dwells in detail on the several popular cries, such as, "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work," illustrating them from the Bible, urging his readers to take it as the true Radical Reformer's Guide, if they were longing for the same thing as he was longing for—to see all humbug, idleness, injustice, swept out of England. His other contributions to these periodicals consisted of some of his best short poems: "The Day of the Lord;" "The Three Fishers;" "Old and New," and others; of a series of Letters on the Frimley murder; of a short story called "The Nun's Pool," and of some most charming articles on the pictures in the National Gallery, and the collections in the British Museum, intended to teach the English people how to use and enjoy their own property.

I think I know every line which was ever published under the signature Parson Lot; and I take it upon myself to say, that there is in all that "burning language" nothing more revolutionary than the extracts given above from his letters to the Chartists.

But, it may be said, apart from his writings, did not Parson Lot declare himself a Chartist in a public meeting in London; and did he not preach in a London pulpit a

political sermon, which brought up the incumbent, who had invited him, to protest from the altar against the doctrine which had just been delivered?

Yes! Both statements are true. Here are the facts as to the speech, those as to the sermon I will give in their place. In the early summer of 1848 some of those who felt with C. Kingsley that the "People's Charter" had not had fair play or courteous treatment, and that those who signed it had real wrongs to complain of, put themselves into communication with the leaders, and met and talked with them. At last it seemed that the time was come for some more public meeting, and one was called at the Cranbourn Tavern, over which Mr. Maurice presided. After the president's address several very bitter speeches followed, and a vehement attack was specially directed against the Church and the clergy. The meeting waxed warm, and seemed likely to come to no good, when Kingsley rose, folded his arms across his chest, threw his head back, and began—with the stammer which always came at first when he was much moved, but which fixed every one's attention at once—"I am a Church of England parson"—a long pause—"and a Chartist;" and then he went on to explain how far he thought them right in their claim for a reform of Parliament; how deeply he sympathized with their sense of the injustice of the law as it affected them; how ready he was to help in all ways to get these things set right; and then to denounce their methods, in very much the same terms as I have already quoted from his letters to the Chartists. Probably no one who was present ever heard a speech which told more at the time. I had a singular proof that the effect did not pass away. The most violent speaker on that occasion was one of the staff of the leading Chartist newspaper. I lost sight of him entirely for more than twenty years, and saw him again, a little grey shrivelled man, by Kingsley's side, at the grave of Mr. Maurice, in the cemetery at Hampstead.

The experience of this meeting encouraged its promoters to continue the series, which they did with a success which surprised no one more than themselves.

Kingsley's opinion of them may be gathered from the following extract from a letter to his wife:—

"*June* 4, 1848, Evening.—A few words before bed. I have just come home from the meeting. No one spoke but working men, gentlemen I should call them, in every sense of the term. Even *I* was perfectly astonished by the courtesy, the reverence to Maurice, who sat there like an Apollo, their eloquence, the brilliant, nervous, well-chosen language, the deep simple earnestness, the rightness and moderation of their thoughts. And these are the *Chartists,* these are the men who are called fools and knaves—who are refused the rights which are bestowed on every profligate fop. . . It is God's cause, fear not He will be with us, and if He is with us, who shall be against us?"

But while he was rapidly winning the confidence of the working classes, he was raising up a host of more or less hostile critics in other quarters by his writings in "Politics for the People," which journal was in the midst of its brief and stormy career. At the end of June, 1848, he writes to Mr. Ludlow, one of the editors—

"I fear my utterances have had a great deal to do with the 'Politics'' unpopularity. I have got worse handled than any of you by poor and rich. There is one comfort, that length of ears is in the donkey species always compensated by toughness of hide. But it is a pleasing prospect for me (if you knew all that has been said and written about Parson Lot), when I look forward and know that my future explosions are likely to become more and more obnoxious to the old gentlemen, who stuff their ears with cotton, and then swear the children are not screaming."

"Politics for the People" was discontinued for want of funds; but its supporters, including all those who were working under Mr. Maurice—who, however much they might differ in opinions, were of one mind as to the danger of the time, and the duty of every man to do his utmost to meet that danger—were bent upon making another effort. In the autumn, Mr. Ludlow, and others of their number who spent the vacation abroad, came back with

accounts of the efforts at association which were being made by the workpeople of Paris.

The question of starting such associations in England as the best means of fighting the slop system—which the "Chronicle" was showing to lie at the root of the misery and distress which bred Chartists—was anxiously debated. It was at last resolved to make the effort, and to identify the new journal with the cause of Association, and to publish a set of tracts in connection with it, of which Kingsley undertook to write the first, "Cheap Clothes and Nasty."

So "the Christian Socialist" was started, with Mr. Ludlow for editor, the tracts on Christian Socialism begun under Mr. Maurice's supervision, and the society for promoting working-men's associations was formed out of the body of men who were already working with Mr. Maurice. The great majority of these joined, though the name was too much for others. The question of taking it had been much considered, and it was decided, on the whole, to be best to do so boldly, even though it might cost valuable allies. Kingsley was of course consulted on every point, though living now almost entirely at Eversley, and his views as to the proper policy to be pursued may be gathered best from the following extracts from letters of his to Mr. Ludlow—

"We must touch the workman at all his points of interest. First and foremost at association—but also at political rights, as grounded both on the Christian ideal of the Church, and on the historic facts of the Anglo-Saxon race. Then national education, sanitary and dwelling-house reform, the free sale of land, and corresponding reform of the land laws, moral improvement of the family relation, public places of recreation (on which point I am very earnest), and I think a set of hints from history, and sayings of great men, of which last I have been picking up from Plato, Demosthenes, &c."

1849.—"This is a puling, quill-driving, soft-handed age—among our own rank, I mean. Cowardice is called meekness; to temporize is to be charitable and reverent; to speak truth, and shame the devil, is to offend weak brethren, who, somehow or other, never complain of their

weak consciences till you hit them hard. And yet, my dear fellow, I still remain of my old mind—that it is better to say too much than too little, and more merciful to knock a man down with a pick-axe than to prick him to death with pins. The world says, No. It hates anything demonstrative, or violent (except on its own side), or unrefined."

1849.—"The question of property is one of these cases. We must face it in this age—simply because it faces us."—"I want to commit myself—I want to make others commit themselves. No man can fight the devil with a long ladle, however pleasant it may be to eat with him with one. A man never fishes well in the morning till he has tumbled into the water."

And the counsels of Parson Lot had undoubtedly great weight in giving an aggressive tone both to the paper and the society. But if he was largely responsible for the fighting temper of the early movement, he, at any rate, never shirked his share of the fighting. His name was the butt at which all shafts were aimed. As Lot "seemed like one that mocked to his sons-in-law," so seemed the Parson to the most opposite sections of the British nation. As a friend wrote of him at the time, he "had at any rate escaped the curse of the false prophets, 'Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.'" Many of the attacks and criticisms were no doubt aimed not so much at him personally as at the body of men with whom, and for whom, he was working; but as he was (except Mr. Maurice) the only one whose name was known, he got the lion's share of all the abuse. The storm broke on him from all points of the compass at once. An old friend and fellow-contributor to "Politics for the People," led the Conservative attack, accusing him of unsettling the minds of the poor, making them discontented, &c. Some of the foremost Chartists wrote virulently against him for "attempting to justify the God of the Old Testament," who, they maintained, was unjust and cruel, and, at any rate, not the God "of the people." The political economists fell on him for his anti-Malthusian belief, that the undeveloped fertility of the earth need

not be overtaken by population within any time which it concerned us to think about. The quarterlies joined in the attack on his economic heresies. The "Daily News" opened a cross fire on him from the common-sense Liberal battery, denouncing the "revolutionary nonsense, which is termed Christian Socialisms"; and, after some balancing, the "Guardian," representing in the press the side of the Church to which he leant, turned upon him in a very cruel article on the republication of "Yeast" (originally written for "Fraser's Magazine"), and accused him of teaching heresy in doctrine, and in morals "that a certain amount of youthful profligacy does no real permanent harm to the character, perhaps strengthens it for a useful and religious life."

In this one instance Parson Lot fairly lost his temper, and answered, "as was answered to the Jesuit of old—*mentiris impudentissime.*" With the rest he seemed to enjoy the conflict and "kept the ring," like a candidate for the wrestling championship in his own county of Devon against all comers, one down another come on.

The fact is, that Charles Kingsley was born a fighting man, and believed in bold attack. "No human power ever beat back a resolute forlorn hope," he used to say; "to be got rid of, they must be blown back with grape and canister," because the attacking party have all the universe behind them, the defence only that small part which is shut up in their walls. And he felt most strongly at this time that hard fighting was needed. "It is a pity" he writes to Mr. Ludlow, "that telling people what's right, won't make them do it; but not a new fact, though that ass the world has quite forgotten it; and assures you that dear sweet 'incompris' mankind only wants to be told the way to the millennium to walk willingly into it—which is a lie. If you want to get mankind, if not to heaven, at least out of hell, kick them out." And again, a little later on, in urging the policy which the "Christian Socialist" should still follow—

1851.—"It seems to me that in such a time as this the only way to fight against the devil is to attack him. He

has got it too much his own way to meddle with us if we don't meddle with him. But the very devil has feelings, and if you prick him will roar . . . whereby you, at all events, gain the not-every-day-of-the-week-to-be-attained benefit of finding out where he is. Unless, indeed, as I suspect, the old rascal plays ventriloquist (as big grasshoppers do when you chase them), and puts you on a wrong scent, by crying 'Fire!' out of saints' windows. Still, the odds are if you prick lustily enough, you make him roar unawares."

The memorials of his many controversies lie about in the periodicals of that time, and any one who cares to hunt them up will be well repaid, and struck with the vigour of the defence, and still more with the complete change in public opinion, which has brought the England of to-day clean round to the side of Parson Lot. The most complete perhaps of his fugitive pieces of this kind is the pamphlet, "Who are the friends of Order?" published by J. W. Parker and Son, in answer to a very fair and moderate article in "Fraser's Mazagine." The Parson there points out how he and his friends were "cursed by demagogues as aristocrats, and by tories as democrats, when in reality they were neither." And urges that the very fact of the Continent being overrun with Communist fanatics is the best argument for preaching association here.

But though he faced his adversaries bravely, it must not be inferred that he did not feel the attacks and misrepresentations very keenly. In many respects, though housed in a strong and vigorous body, his spirit was an exceedingly tender and sensitive one. I have often thought that at this time his very sensitiveness drove him to say things more broadly and incisively because he was speaking as it were somewhat against the grain, and knew that the line he was taking would be misunderstood, and would displease and alarm those with whom he had most sympathy. For he was by nature and education an aristocrat in the best sense of the word, believed that a landed aristocracy was a blessing to the country, and that no country would gain the highest liberty without such a class, holding its own position

firmly, but in sympathy with the people. He liked their habits and ways, and keenly enjoyed their society. Again, he was full of reverence for science and scientific men, and specially for political economy and economists, and desired eagerly to stand well with them. And it was a most bitter trial to him to find himself not only in sharp antagonism with traders and employers of labour, which he looked for, but with these classes also.

On the other hand many of the views and habits of those with whom he found himself associated were very distasteful to him. In a new social movement, such as that of association as it took shape in 1849-50, there is certain to be great attraction for restless and eccentric persons, and in point of fact many such joined it. The beard movement was then in its infancy, and any man except a dragoon who wore hair on his face was regarded as a dangerous character, with whom it was compromising to be seen in any public place—a person in sympathy with *sansculottes*, and who would dispense with trousers but for his fear of the police. Now whenever Kingsley attended a meeting of the promoters of association in London, he was sure to find himself in the midst of bearded men, vegetarians, and other eccentric persons, and the contact was very grievous to him. "As if we shall not be abused enough," he used to say, "for what we must say and do without being saddled with mischievous nonsense of this kind." To less sensitive men the effect of eccentricity upon him was almost comic, as when on one occasion he was quite upset and silenced by the appearance of a bearded member of Council at an important deputation in a straw hat and blue plush gloves. He did not recover from the depression produced by those gloves for days. Many of the workmen, too, who were most prominent in the Associations were almost as little to his mind—windy inflated kind of persons, with a lot of fine phrases in their mouths which they did not know the meaning of.

But in spite of all that was distasteful to him in some of its surroundings, the co-operative movement (as it is now called) entirely approved itself to his conscience and

judgment, and mastered him so that he was ready to risk whatever had to be risked in fighting its battle. Often in those days, seeing how loath Charles Kingsley was to take in hand much of the work which Parson Lot had to do, and how fearlessly and thoroughly he did it after all, one was reminded of the old Jewish prophets, such as Amos the herdsman of Tekoa—"I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son, but I was an herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and said unto me, Go prophesy unto my people Israel."

The following short extracts from his correspondence with Mr. Ludlow, as to the conduct of the "Christian Socialist," and his own contributions to it, may perhaps serve to show how his mind was working at this time:—

Sept., 1850.—"I cannot abide the notion of Branch Churches or Free (sect) Churches, and unless my whole train of thought alters, I will resist the temptation as coming from the devil. Where I am I am doing God's work, and when the Church is ripe for more, the Head of the Church will put the means our way. You seem to fancy that we may have a *Deus quidam Deceptor* over us after all. If I did I'd go and blow my dirty brains out and be rid of the whole thing at once. I would indeed. If God, when people ask Him to teach and guide them, does not; if when they confess themselves rogues and fools to Him, and beg Him to make them honest and wise, He does not, but darkens them, and deludes them into bogs and pitfalls, is he a Father? You fall back into Judaism, friend."

Dec., 1850.—"Jeremiah is my favourite book now. It has taught me more than tongue can tell. But I am much disheartened, and am minded to speak no more words in this name (Parson Lot); and yet all these bullyings teach one, correct one, warn one—show one that God is not leaving one to go one's own way. 'Christ reigns,' quoth Luther."

It was at this time, in the winter of 1850, that "Alton Locke" was published. He had been engaged on it for more than a year, working at it in the midst of all his

controversies. The following extracts from his correspondence with Mr. Ludlow will tell readers more about it than any criticism, if they have at all realized the time at which it was written, or his peculiar work in that time.

February, 1849.—"I have hopes from the book I am writing, which has revealed itself to me so rapidly and methodically that I feel it comes down from above, and that only my folly can spoil it, which I pray against daily."

1849.—"I think the notion a good one (referring to other work for the paper which he had been asked to do), but I feel no inspiration at all that way; and I dread being tempted to more and more bitterness, harsh judgment, and evil speaking. I dread it. I am afraid sometimes I shall end in universal snarling. Besides, my whole time is taken up with my book, and *that* I do feel inspired to write. But there is something else which weighs awfully on my mind—(the first number of *Cooper's Journal*, which he sent me the other day). Here is a man of immense influence openly preaching Strausseanism to the workmen, and in a fair, honest, manly way which must tell. Who will answer him? Who will answer Strauss?* Who will denounce him as a vile aristocrat, robbing the poor man of his Saviour—of the ground of all democracy, all freedom, all association—of the Charter itself? *Oh, si mihi centum voces et ferrea lingua!* Think about *that*."

January, 1850.—"A thousand thanks for your letter, though it only shows me what I have long suspected, that I know hardly enough yet to make the book what it should be. As you have made a hole, you must help to fill it. Can you send me any publication which would give me a good notion of the Independents' view of politics, also one which would give a good notion of the Fox-Emerson-Strauss school of Blague-Unitarianism, which is superseding dissent just now. It was with the ideal of Calvinism, and its ultimate bearing on the

* He did the work himself. After many interviews, and a long correspondence with him, Thomas Cooper changed his views, and has been lecturing and preaching for many years as a Christian.

people's cause, that I wished to deal. I believe that there must be internecine war between the people's church—*i.e.*, the future development of Catholic Christianity, and Calvinism even in its mildest form, whether in the Establishment or out of it—and I have counted the cost and will give every *party* its slap in their turn. But I will alter, as far as I can, all you dislike."

August, 1850.—"How do you know, dearest man, that I was not right in making the Alton of the second volume different from the first? In showing the individuality of the man swamped and warped by the routine of misery and discontent? How do you know that the historic and human interest of the book was not intended to end with Mackay's death, in whom old radicalism dies, 'not having received the promises,' to make room for the radicalism of the future? How do you know that the book from that point was not intended to take a mythic and prophetic form, that those dreams come in for the very purpose of taking the story off the ground of the actual into the deeper and wider one of the ideal, and that they do actually do what they were intended to do? How do you know that my idea of carrying out Eleanor's sermons in practice were just what I could not—and if I could, dared not, give? that all that I could do was to leave them as seed, to grow by itself in many forms, in many minds, instead of embodying them in some action which would have been both as narrow as my own idiosyncrasy, gain the reproach of insanity, and be simply answered by —'If such things have been done, where are they?' and lastly, how do you know that I had not a special meaning in choosing a civilized fine lady as my missionary, one of a class which, as it does exist, God must have something for it to do, and, as it seems, plenty to do, from the fact that a few gentlemen whom I could mention, not to speak of Fowell Buxtons, Howards, Ashleys, &c., have done more for the people in one year than they have done for themselves in fifty? If I had made her an organizer, as well as a preacher, your complaint might have been just. My dear man, the artist is a law unto himself—or rather God is a law to him, when he prays,

as I have earnestly day after day about this book—to be taught how to say the right thing in the right way—and I assure you I did not get tired of my work, but laboured as earnestly at the end as I did at the beginning. The rest of your criticism, especially about the interpenetration of doctrine and action, is most true, and shall be attended to.—Your brother,

C. K."

The next letter, on the same topic, in answer to criticisms on "Alton Locke," is addressed to a brother clergyman—

"EVERSLEY, *January* 13, 1851.

"REV. DEAR SIR,—I will answer your most interesting letter as shortly as I can, and if possible in the same spirit of honesty as that in which you have written to me.

"*First*, I do not think the cry 'Get on' to be anything but a devil's cry. The moral of my book is that the working man who tries to get on, to desert his class and rise above it, enters into a lie, and leaves God's path for his own—with consequences.

"*Second*, I believe that a man might be as a tailor or a costermonger, every inch of him a saint, a scholar, and a gentleman, for I have seen some few such already. I believe hundreds of thousands more would be so, if their businesses were put on a Christian footing, and themselves given by education, sanitary reforms, &c., the means of developing their own latent capabilities—I think the cry, "Rise in Life," has been excited by the very increasing impossibility of being anything but brutes while they struggle below. I know well all that is doing in the way of education, &c., but I do assert that the disease of degradation has been for the last forty years increasing faster than the remedy. And I believe, from experience, that when you put workmen into human dwellings, and give them a Christian education, so far from wishing discontentedly to rise out of their class, or to level others to it, exactly the opposite takes place. They become sensible of the dignity of work, and they begin to see their labour

as a true calling in God's Church, now that it is cleared from the accidentia which made it look, in their eyes, only a soulless drudgery in a devil's workshop of a *World*.

"*Third*, From the advertisement of an "English Republic" you send, I can guess who will be the writers in it, &c., &c., being behind the scenes. It will come to nought. Everything of this kind is coming to nought now. The workmen are tired of idols, ready and yearning for the Church and the Gospel, and such men as your friend may laugh at Julian Harney, Feargus O'Connor, and the rest of that smoke of the pit. Only we live in a great crisis, and the Lord requires great things of us. The fields are white to harvest. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He may send forth labourers into His harvest.

"*Fourth*, As to the capacities of working-men, I am afraid that your excellent friend will find that he has only the refuse of working intellects to form his induction on. The devil has got the best long ago. By the neglect of the Church, by her dealing (like the Popish Church and all weak churches) only with women, children, and beggars, the cream and pith of working intellect is almost exclusively self-educated, and, therefore, alas! infidel. If he goes on as he is doing, lecturing on history, poetry, science, and all the things which the workmen crave for, and can only get from such men as H——, Thomas Cooper, &c., mixed up with Straussism and infidelity, he will find that he will draw back to his Lord's fold, and to his lecture room, slowly, but surely, men, whose powers will astonish him, as they have astonished me.

"*Fifth*, The workmen whose quarrels you mention are not Christians, or socialists either. They are of all creeds and none. We are teaching them to become Christians by teaching them gradually that true socialism, true liberty, brotherhood, and true equality (not the carnal dead level equality of the Communist, but the spiritual equality of the church idea, which gives every man an equal chance of developing and using God's gifts, and rewards every man according to his work, without respect of persons) is only to be found in loyalty and

obedience to Christ. They do quarrel, but if you knew how they used to quarrel before association, the improvement since would astonish you. And the French associations do not quarrel at all. I can send you a pamphlet on them, if you wish, written by an eye-witness, a friend of mine.

"*Sixth*, If your friend wishes to see what can be made of workmen's brains, let him, in God's name, go down to Harrow Weald, and there see Mr. Monro—see what he has done with his own national school boys. I have his opinion as to the capabilities of those minds, which we, alas! now so sadly neglect. I only ask him to go and ask of that man the question which you have asked of me.

"*Seventh*, May I, in reference to myself and certain attacks on me, say, with all humility, that I do not speak from hearsay now, as has been asserted, from second-hand picking and stealing out of those "Reports on Labour and the Poor," in the "Morning Chronicle," which are now being reprinted in a separate form, and which I entreat you to read if you wish to get a clear view of the real state of the working classes.

"From my cradle, as the son of an active clergyman, I have been brought up in the most familiar intercourse with the poor in town and country. My mother, a second Mrs. Fry, in spirit and act. For fourteen years my father has been the rector of a very large metropolitan parish—and I speak what I know, and testify that which I have seen. With earnest prayer, in fear and trembling, I wrote my book, and I trust in Him to whom I prayed that He has not left me to my own prejudices or idols on any important point relating to the state of the possibilities of the poor for whom He died. Any use which you choose you can make of this letter. If it should seem worth your while to honour me with any further communications, I shall esteem them a delight, and the careful consideration of them a duty.—Believe me, Rev. and dear Sir, your faithful and obedient servant,

"C. KINGSLEY."

By this time the society for promoting associations was thoroughly organized, and consisted of a council of promoters, of which Kingsley was a member, and a central board, on which the managers of the associations and a delegate from each of them sat. The council had published a number of tracts, beginning with "Cheap Clothes and Nasty," which had attracted the attention of many persons, including several of the London clergy, who connected themselves more or less closely with the movement. Mr. Maurice, Kingsley, Hansard, and others of these, were often asked to preach on social questions, and when in 1851, on the opening of the Great Exhibition, immense crowds of strangers were drawn to London, they were specially in request. For many London incumbents threw open their churches, and organized series of lectures, specially bearing on the great topic of the day. It was now that the incident happened which once more brought upon Kingsley the charge of being a revolutionist, and which gave him more pain than all other attacks put together. One of the incumbents before referred to begged Mr. Maurice to take part in his course of lectures, and to ask Kingsley to do so; assuring Mr. Maurice that he "had been reading Kingsley's works with the greatest interest, and earnestly desired to secure him as one of his lecturers." "I promised to mention this request to him," Mr. Maurice says, "though I knew he rarely came to London, and seldom preached except in his own parish. He agreed, though at some inconvenience, that he would preach a sermon on the 'Message of the Church to the Labouring Man.' I suggested the subject to him. The incumbent intimated the most cordial approval of it. He had asked us, not only with a previous knowledge of our published writings, but expressly because he had that knowledge. I pledge you my word that no questions were asked as to what we were going to say, and no guarantees given. Mr. Kingsley took precisely that view of the message of the Church to labouring men which every reader of his books would have expected him to take."

Kingsley took his text from Luke iv. verses 16 to 21:

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor," &c. What then was that gospel? Kingsley asks, and goes on—"I assert that the business for which God sends a Christian priest in a Christian nation is, to preach freedom, equality, and brotherhood in the fullest, deepest, widest meaning of those three great words; that in as far as he so does, he is a true priest, doing his Lord's work with his Lord's blessing on him; that in as far as he does not he is no priest at all, but a traitor to God and man"; and again, "I say that these words express the very pith and marrow of a priest's business; I say that they preach freedom, equality, and brotherhood to rich and poor for ever and ever." Then he goes on to warn his hearers how there is always a counterfeit in this world of the noblest message and teaching.

Thus there are two freedoms—the false, where a man is free to do what he likes; the true, where a man is free to do what he ought.

Two equalities—the false, which reduces all intellects and all characters to a dead level, and gives the same power to the bad as to the good, to the wise as to the foolish, ending thus in practice in the grossest inequality; the true, wherein each man has equal power to educate and use whatever faculties or talents God has given him, be they less or more. This is the divine equality which the Church proclaims, and nothing else proclaims as she does.

Two brotherhoods—the false, where a man chooses who shall be his brothers, and whom he will treat as such; the true, in which a man believes that all are his brothers, not by the will of the flesh, or the will of man, but by the will of God, whose children they all are alike. The Church has three special possessions and treasures. The Bible, which proclaims man's freedom, Baptism his equality, the Lord's Supper his brotherhood.

At the end of this sermon (which would scarcely cause surprise to-day if preached by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Chapel Royal), the incumbent got up at the altar and declared his belief that great part of the

doctrine of the sermon was untrue, and that he had expected a sermon of an entirely different kind. To a man of the preacher's vehement temperament it must have required a great effort not to reply at the moment. The congregation was keenly excited, and evidently expected him to do so. He only bowed his head, pronounced the blessing, and came down from the pulpit.

I must go back a little to take up the thread of his connection with, and work for, the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations. After it had passed the first difficulties of starting, he was seldom able to attend either Council or Central Board. Every one else felt how much more important and difficult work he was doing by fighting the battle in the press, down at Eversley, but he himself was eager to take part in the everyday business, and uneasy if he was not well informed as to what was going on.

Sometimes, however, he would come up to the Council, when any matter specially interesting to him was in question, as in the following example, when a new member of the Council, an Eton master, had objected to some strong expressions in one of his letters on the Frimley murder, in the "Christian Socialist":—

1849.—"The upper classes are like a Yankee captain sitting on the safety valve, and serenely whistling—but what will be will be. As for the worthy Eton parson, I consider it infinitely expedient that he be entreated to vent his whole dislike in the open Council forthwith, under a promise on my part not to involve him in any controversy or reprisals, or to answer in any tone except that of the utmost courtesy and respect. Pray do this. It will at once be a means of gaining him, and a good example, please God, to the working men; and for the Frimley letter, put it in the fire if you like, or send it back to have the last half re-written, or 'anything else you like, my pretty little dear.'"

But his prevailing feeling was getting to be, that he was becoming an outsider—

"Nobody deigns to tell me," he wrote to me, "how things go on, and who helps, and whether I can help. In

short, I know nothing, and begin to fancy that you, like some others, think me a lukewarm and timeserving aristocrat, after I have ventured more than many, because I had more to venture."

The same feeling comes out in the following letter, which illustrates too, very well, both his deepest conviction as to the work, the mixture of playfulness and earnestness with which he handled it, and his humble estimate of himself. It refers to the question of the admission of a new association to the Union. It was necessary, of course, to see that the rules of a society, applying for admission to the Union, were in proper form, and that sufficient capital was forthcoming, and the decision lay with the Central Board, controlled in some measure by the Council of Promoters.

An association of clay-pipe makers had applied for admission, and had been refused by the vote of the central board. The Council, however, thought there were grounds for reconsidering the decision, and to strengthen the case for admission, Kingsley's opinion was asked. He replied :—

"EVERSLEY, *May* 31, 1850.

"The sight of your handwriting comforted me—for nobody takes any notice of me, not even the printers; so I revenge myself by being as idle as a dog, and fishing, and gardening, and basking in this glorious sun. But your letter set me thanking God that he has raised up men to do the work of which I am not worthy. As for the pipe-makers, give my compliments to the autocrats, and tell them it is a shame. The Vegetarians would have quite as much right to refuse the Butchers, because, forsooth, theirs is now discovered not to be a necessary trade. Bosh! The question is this—If association be a great Divine law and duty, the realization of the Church idea, no man has *a right* to refuse any body of men, into whose heart God has put it to come and associate. It may be answered that these men's motives are self-interested. I say, 'Judge no man.' You dare not refuse a heathen baptism because you choose to think that his

only motive for turning Christian is the selfish one of saving his own rascally soul. No more have you a right to refuse to men an entrance into the social Church. They must come in, and they will, because association is not men's dodge and invention but God's law for mankind and society, which He has made, and we must not limit. I don't know whether I am intelligible, but what's more important, I know I am right. Just read this to the autocrats, and tell them, with my compliments, they are Popes, Tyrants, Manichees, Ascetics, Sectarians, and everything else that is abominable; and if they used as many pipes as I do, they would know the blessing of getting them cheap, and start an associate baccy factory besides. Shall we try? But, this one little mistake excepted (though, if they repeat it, it will become a great mistake, and a wrong, and a ruinous wrong), they are much better fellows than poor I, and doing a great deal more good, and at every fresh news of their deeds I feel like Job's horse, when he scents the battle afar off."

No small part of the work of the Council consisted in mediating and arbitrating in the disputes between the associates and their managers; indeed, such work kept the legal members of the board (none of whom were then overburdened with regular practice) pretty fully occupied. Some such dispute had arisen in one of the most turbulent of these associations, and had been referred to me for settlement. I had satisfied myself as to the facts, and considered my award, and had just begun to write out the draft, when I was called away from my chambers, and left the opening lines lying on my desk. They ran as follows:—"The Trustees of the Mile End Association of Engineers, seeing that the quarrels between the associates have not ceased"—at which word I broke off. On returning to my chambers a quarter of an hour later, I found a continuation in the following words:—

"And that every man is too much inclined to behave himself like a beast,
In spite of our glorious humanity, which requires neither God nor priest,

Yet is daily praised and plastered by ten thousand fools at least—
Request Mr. Hughes' presence at their jawshop in the East,
Which don't they wish they may get it, for he goes out to-night to feast
At the Rev. C. Kingsley's rectory, Chelsea, where he'll get his gullet greased
With the best of Barto Valle's port, and will have his joys increased
By meeting his old college chum, McDougal the Borneo priest—
So come you thief, and drop your brief,
At six o'clock without relief;
And if you won't may you come to grief,
Says Parson Lot the Socialist Chief,
Who signs his mark at the foot of the leaf—thus"

and, at the end, a clenched fist was sketched in a few bold lines, and under it, "Parson Lot, his mark" written.

I don't know that I can do better than give the history of the rest of the day. Knowing his town habits well, I called at Parker, the publisher's, after chambers, and found him there, sitting on a table and holding forth on politics to our excellent little friend, John Wm. Parker, the junior partner.

We started to walk down to Chelsea, and a dense fog came on before we had reached Hyde Park Corner. Both of us knew the way well; but we lost it half a dozen times, and his spirit seemed to rise as the fog thickened. "Isn't this like life," he said, after one of our blunders: "a deep yellow fog all round, with a dim light here and there shining through. You grope your way on from one lamp to another, and you go up wrong streets and back again; but you get home at last—there's always light enough for that." After a short pause he said, quite abruptly, "Tom, do you want to live to be old?" I said I had never thought on the subject; and he went on, "I dread it more than I can say. To feel one's powers going, and to end in snuff and stink. Look at the last days of Scott and Wordsworth, and Southey." I suggested St. John. "Yes," he said, "that's the right thing, and will do for Bunsen, and great, tranquil men like him. The longer they live the better for all. But for an eager, fiery nature like mine, with fierce passions eating one's life out, it won't do. If I live twenty years I know what will

happen to me. The back of my brain will soften, and I shall most likely go blind."

The Bishop got down somehow by six. The dinner did not last long, for the family were away, and afterwards we adjourned to the study, and Parson Lot rose to his best. He stood before the fire, while the Bishop and I took the two fireside arm chairs, and poured himself out, on subject after subject, sometimes when much moved taking a tramp up and down the room, a long clay pipe in his right hand (at which he gave an occasional suck; it was generally out, but he scarcely noticed it), and his left hand passed behind his back, clasping the right elbow. It was a favourite attitude with him, when he was at ease with his company.

We were both bent on drawing him out; and the first topic, I think, raised by the Bishop was, Froude's history, then recently published. He took up the cudgels for Henry VIII., whom we accused of arbitrariness. Henry was not arbitrary; arbitrary men are the most obstinate of men? Why? Because they are weak. The strongest men are always ready to hear reason and change their opinions, because the strong man knows that if he loses an opinion to-day he can get just as good a one to-morrow in its place. But the weak man holds on to his opinion, because he can't get another, and he knows it.

Soon afterwards he got upon trout fishing, which was a strong bond of union between him and me, and discoursed on the proper methods of fishing chalk streams. "Your flies can't be too big, but they must be on small gut, not on base viol fiddle strings, like those you brought down to Farnham last year. I tell you gut is the thing that does it. Trout know that flies don't go about with a ring and a hand pole through their noses, like so many prize bulls of Lord Ducie's."

Then he got on the possible effect of association on the future of England, and from that to the first International Exhibition, and the building which was going up in Hyde Park.

"I mean to run a muck soon," he said, "against all this talk about genius and high art, and the rest of it.

It will be the ruin of us, as it has been of Germany. They have been for fifty years finding out, and showing people how to do everything in heaven and earth, and have done nothing. They are dead even yet, and will be till they get out of the high art fit. We were dead, and the French were dead till their revolution; but that brought us to life. Why didn't the Germans come to life to? Because they set to work with their arts, sciences, and how to do this, that, and the other thing, and doing nothing. Goethe was, in great part, the ruin of Germany. He was like a great fog coming down on the German people, and wrapping them up."

Then he, in his turn, drew the Bishop about Borneo, and its people, and fauna and flora; and we got some delightful stories of apes, and converts, and honey bears, Kingsley showing himself, by his questions, as familiar with the Bornean plants and birds, as though he had lived there. Later on we got him on his own works, and he told us how he wrote. "I can't think, even on scientific subjects, except in the dramatic form. It is what Tom said to Harry, and what Harry answered him. I never put pen to paper till I have two or three pages in my head, and see them as if they were printed. Then I write them off, and take a turn in the garden, and so on again." We wandered back to fishing, and I challenged his keenness for making a bag. "Ah!" he said, "that's all owing to my blessed habit of intensity, which has been my greatest help in life. I go at what I am about as if there was nothing else in the world for the time being. That's the secret of all hard-working men; but most of them can't carry it into their amusements. Luckily for me I can stop from all work, at short notice, and turn head over heels in the sight of all creation, and say, I won't be good or bad, or wise, or anything, till two o'clock to-morrow."

At last the Bishop would go, so we groped our way with him into the King's Road, and left him in charge of a link-boy. When we got back, I said something laughingly about his gift of talk, which had struck me more that evening than ever before.

"Yes," he said, "I have it all in me. I could be as great a talker as any man in England, but for my stammering. I know it well; but it's a blessed thing for me. You must know, by this time, that I'm a very shy man, and shyness and vanity always go together. And so I think of what every fool will say of me, and can't help it. When a man's first thought is not whether a thing is right or wrong, but what will Lady A., or Mr. B. say about it, depend upon it he wants a thorn in the flesh, like my stammer. When I am speaking for God, in the pulpit, or praying by bedsides, I never stammer. My stammer is a blessed thing for me. It keeps me from talking in company, and from going out as much as I should do but for it."

It was two o'clock before we thought of moving, and then, the fog being as bad as ever, he insisted on making me up a bed on the floor. While we were engaged in this process, he confided to me that he had heard of a doctor who was very successful in curing stammering, and was going to try him. I laughed, and reminded him of his thorn in the flesh, to which he replied, with a quaint twinkle of his eye, "Well, that's true enough. But a man has no right to be a nuisance, if he can help it, and no more right to go about amongst his fellows stammering, than he has to go about stinking."

At this time he was already at work on another novel; and, in answer to a remonstrance from a friend, who was anxious that he should keep all his strength for social reform, writes—

1851.—"I know that He has made me a parish priest, and that that is the duty which lies nearest me, and that I may seem to be leaving my calling in novel writing. But has He not taught me all these very things *by my* parish priest life? Did He, too, let me become a strong, daring, sporting, wild man of the woods for nothing? Surely the education He has given me so different from that which authors generally receive, points out to me a peculiar calling to preach on these points from my own experience, as it did to good old Isaac Walton, as it has done in our own day to that truly noble

man, Captain Marryat. Therefore I must believe, '*si tu sequi la tua stella*,' with Dante, that He who ordained my star will not lead me *into* temptation, but *through* it, as Maurice says. Without Him all places and methods of life are equally dangerous—with Him, all equally safe. Pray for me, for in myself I am weaker of purpose than a lost grey hound, lazier than a dog in rainy weather."

While the co-operative movement was spreading in all directions, the same impulse was working amongst the trades unions, and the engineers had set the example of uniting all their branches into one society. In this winter they believed themselves strong enough to try conclusions with their employers. The great lock-out in January, 1852, was the consequence. The engineers had appealed to the Council of Promoters to help them in putting their case—which had been much misrepresented—fairly before the public, and Kingsley had been consulted as the person best able to do it. He had declined to interfere, and wrote me the following letter to explain his views. It will show how far he was an encourager of violent measures or views:—

"EVERSLEY, *January* 28, 1852.

"You may have been surprised at my having taken no part in this Amalgamated Iron Trades' matter. And I think that I am bound to say why I have not, and how far I wish my friends to interfere in it.

"I do think that we, the Council of Promoters, shall not be wise in interfering between masters and men; because—1. I question whether the points at issue between them can be fairly understood by any persons not conversant with the practical details of the trade. . .

"2. Nor do I think they have put their case as well as they might. For instance, if it be true that they themselves have invented many, or most, of the improvements in their tools and machinery, they have an argument in favour of keeping out unskilled labourers, which is unanswerable, and yet, that they have never used—viz.: 'Your masters make hundreds and thousands by these

improvements, while we have no remuneration for this inventive talent of ours, but rather lose by it, because it makes the introduction of unskilled labour more easy. Therefore, the only way in which we can get anything like a payment for this inventive faculty of which we make you a present over and above our skilled labour, for which you bargained, is to demand that we, who invent the machines, if we cannot have a share in the profits of them, shall at least have the exclusive privilege of using them, instead of their being, as now, turned against us.' That, I think, is a fair argument; but I have seen nothing of it from any speaker or writer.

"3. I think whatever battle is fought, must be fought by the men themselves. The present dodge of the Manchester school is to cry out against us, as Greg did. 'These Christian Socialists are a set of mediæval parsons, who want to hinder the independence and self-help of the men, and bring them back to absolute feudal maxims; and then, with the most absurd inconsistency, when we get up a corporation workshop, to let the men work on the very independence and self-help of which they talk so fine, they turn round and raise just the opposite yell, and cry, The men can't be independent of capitalists; these associations will fail *because* the men are helping themselves'—showing that what they mean is, that the men shall be independent of every one but themselves—independent of legislators, parsons, advisers, gentlemen, noblemen, and every one that tries to help them by moral agents; but the slaves of the capitalists, bound to them by a servitude increasing instead of lightening with their numbers. Now, the only way in which we can clear the cause of this calumny is to let the men fight their own battle; to prevent any one saying, 'These men are the tools of dreamers and fanatics,' which would be just as ruinously blackening to them in the public eyes, as it would be to let the cry get abroad, 'This is a Socialist movement, destructive of rights of property, communism, Louis Blanc and the devil, &c.' You know the infernal stuff which the devil gets up on such occasions—having no scruples about calling himself hard names,

when it suits his purpose, to blind and frighten respectable old women.

"Moreover, these men are not poor distressed needlewomen or slop-workers. They are the most intelligent and best educated workmen, receiving incomes often higher than a gentleman's son whose education has cost £1000, and if they can't fight their own battles, no men in England can, and the people are not ripe for association, and we must hark back into the competitive rot heap again. All, then, that we can do is, to give advice when asked—to see that they have, as far as we can get at them, a clear stage and no favour, but not by public, but by private influence.

"But we can help them in another way, by showing them the way to associate. That is quite a distinct question from their quarrel with their masters, and we shall be very foolish if we give the press a handle for mixing up the two. We have a right to say to masters, men, and public, 'We know and care nothing about the iron strike. Here are a body of men coming to us, wishing to be shown how to do that which is a right thing for them to do—well or ill off, strike or no strike, namely, associate; and we will help and teach them to do *that* to the very utmost of our power.'

"The Iron Workers' co-operative shops will be watched with lynx eyes, calumniated shamelessly. Our business will be to tell the truth about them, and fight manfully with our pens for them. But we shall never be able to get the ears of the respectabilities and the capitalists, if we appear at this stage of the business. What we must say is, 'If you are needy and enslaved, we will fight for you from pity, whether you be associated or competitive. But you are neither needy, nor, unless you choose, enslaved; and therefore we will only fight for you in proportion as you become associates. Do that, and see if we can't stand hard knocks for your sake.'—Yours ever affectionate, C. KINGSLEY."

In the summer of 1852 (mainly by the continued exertions of the members of the Council, who had supplied Mr. Slaney's committee with all his evidence, and had

worked hard in other ways for this object) a Bill for legalizing Industrial Associations was about to be introduced into the House of Commons. It was supposed at one time that it would be taken in hand by the Government of Lord Derby, then lately come into office, and Kingsley had been canvassing a number of persons to make sure of its passing. On hearing that a Cabinet Minister would probably undertake it, he writes—

"Let him be assured that he will by such a move do more to carry out true Conservatism, and to reconcile the workmen with the real aristocracy, than any politician for the last twenty years has done. The truth is, we are in a critical situation here in England. Not in one of danger —which is the vulgar material notion of a crisis, but at the crucial point, the point of departure of principles and parties which will hereafter become great and powerful. Old Whiggery is dead, old true blue Toryism of the Robert Inglis school is dead too—and in my eyes a great loss. But as live dogs are better than dead lions, let us see what the live dogs are.

"1.—The Peelites, who will ultimately, be sure, absorb into themselves all the remains of Whiggery, and a very large proportion of the Conservative party. In an effete unbelieving age, like this, the Sadducee and the Herodian will be the most captivating philosopher. A scientific laziness, lukewarmness, and compromise, is a cheery theory for the young men of the day, and they will take to it *con amore*. I don't complain of Peel himself. He was a great man, but his method of compromise, though useful enough in particular cases when employed by a great man, becomes a most dastardly "*schema mundi*" when taken up by a school of little men. Therefore the only help which we can hope for from the Peelites is that they will serve as ballast and cooling pump to both parties, but their very trimming and moderation make them fearfully likely to obtain power. It depends on the wisdom of the present government, whether they do or not.

"2.—Next you have the Manchester school, from whom Heaven defend us; for of all narrow, conceited, hypo-

critical, and anarchic and atheistic schemes of the universe, the Cobden and Bright one is exactly the worst. I have no language to express my contempt for it, and therefore I quote what Maurice wrote me this morning. 'If the Ministry would have thrown Protection to the dogs (as I trust they have, in spite of the base attempts of the Corn Law Leaguers to goad them to committing themselves to it, and to hold them up as the people's enemies), and thrown themselves into social measures, who would not have clung to them, to avert that horrible catastrophe of a Manchester ascendency, which I believe in my soul would be fatal to intellect, morality, and freedom, and will be more likely to move a rebellion among the working men than any Tory rule which can be conceived.'

"Of course it would. To pretend to be the workmen's friends, by keeping down the price of bread, when all they want thereby is to keep down wages, and increase profits, and in the meantime to widen the gulf between the working man and all that is time-honoured, refined, and chivalrous in English society, that they may make the men their divided slaves, that is—perhaps half unconsciously, for there are excellent men amongst them—the game of the Manchester School."

"I have never swerved from my one idea of the last seven years, that the real battle of the time is, if England is to be saved from anarchy and unbelief, and utter exhaustion caused by the competitive enslavement of the masses, not Radical or Whig against Peelite or Tory—let the dead bury their dead—but the Church, the gentlemen, and the workman, against the shop-keepers and the Manchester School. The battle could not have been fought forty years ago, because, on one side, the Church was an idle phantasm, the gentleman too ignorant, the workman too merely animal; while, on the other, the Manchester cotton-spinners were all Tories, and the shop-keepers were a distinct class interest from theirs. But now these two latter have united, and the sublime incarnation of shop-keeping and labour-buying in the cheapest market shines forth in the person of Moses & Son, and both cotton-spinners and shop-keepers say 'This is the man!'"

and join in one common press to defend his system. Be it so: now we know our true enemies, and soon the working-men will know them also. But if the present Ministry will not see the possibility of a coalition between them and the workmen, I see no alternative but just what we have been straining every nerve to keep off—a competitive United States, a democracy before which the work of ages will go down in a few years. A true democracy, such as you and I should wish to see, is impossible without a Church and a Queen, and, as I believe, without a gentry. On the conduct of statesmen it will depend whether we are gradually and harmoniously to develop England on her ancient foundations, or whether we are to have fresh paralytic governments succeeding each other in doing nothing, while the workmen and the Manchester School fight out the real questions of the day in ignorance and fury, till the '*culbute generale*' comes, and gentlemen of ancient family, like your humble servant, betake themselves to Canada, to escape, not the Amalgamated Engineers, but their 'masters,' and the slop-working savages whom their masters' system has created, and will by that time have multiplied tenfold.

"I have got a Thames boat on the lake at Bramshill, and am enjoying vigorous sculls. My answer to 'Fraser' is just coming out; spread it where you can."

In the next year or two the first excitement about the co-operative movement cooled down. Parson Lot's pen was less needed, and he turned to other work in his own name. Of the richness and variety of that work this is not the place to speak, but it all bore on the great social problems which had occupied him in the earlier years. The Crimean war weighed on him like a nightmare, and modified some of his political opinions. On the resignation of Lord Aberdeen's Government on the motion for inquiry into the conduct of the war, he writes, February 5, 1855, "It is a very bad job, and a very bad time, be sure, and with a laughing House of Commons we shall go to Gehenna, even if we are not there already—But one comfort is, that even Gehenna can burn nothing but the chaff and carcases, so we shall be none the poorer in

reality. So as the frost has broken gloriously, I wish you would get me a couple of dozen of good flies, viz., cock a bondhues, red palmers with plenty of gold twist; winged duns, with bodies of hare's ear and yellow mohair mixed well; hackle duns with grey bodies, and a wee silver, these last tied as palmers, and the silver ribbed all the way down. If you could send them in a week I shall be very glad, as fishing begins early."

In the midst of the war he was present one day at a council meeting, after which the manager of one of the associations referring to threatened bread riots at Manchester, asked Kingsley's opinion as to what should be done. "There never were but two ways," he said, "since the beginning of the world of dealing with a corn famine. One is to let the merchants buy it up and hold it as long as they can, as we do. And this answers the purpose best in the long run, for they will be selling corn six months hence when we shall want it more than we do now, and makes us provident against our wills. The other is Joseph's plan." Here the manager broke in, "Why didn't our Government step in then, and buy largely, and store in public granaries?" "Yes," said Kingsley, "and why ain't you and I flying about with wings and dewdrops hanging to our tails. Joseph's plan won't do for us. What minister would we trust with money enough to buy corn for the people, or power to buy where he chose." And he went on to give his questioner a lecture in political economy, which the most orthodox opponent of the popular notions about Socialism would have applauded to the echo.

By the end of the year he had nearly finished "Westward Ho!"—the most popular of his novels, which the war had literally wrung out of him. He writes—

? "*December* 18, 1855.

"I am getting more of a Government man every day. I don't see how they could have done better in any matter, because I don't see but that *I* should have done a thousand times worse in their place, and that is the only fair standard.

"As for a ballad—oh! my dear lad, there is no use fiddling while Rome is burning. I have nothing to sing about those glorious fellows, except 'God save the Queen and them.' I tell you the whole thing stuns me, so I cannot sit down to make fiddle rhyme with diddle about it—or blundered with hundred like Alfred Tennyson. He is no Tyrtæus, though he has a glimpse of what Tyrtæus ought to be. But I have not even that; and am going rabbit shooting to-morrow instead. But every man has his calling, and my novel is mine, because I am fit for nothing better. The book" ('Westward Ho!') "will be out the middle or end of January, if the printers choose. It is a sanguinary book, but perhaps containing doctrine profitable for these times. My only pain is that I have been forced to sketch poor Paddy as a very worthless fellow then, while just now he is turning out a hero. I have made the deliberate *amende honorable* in a note."

Then, referring to some criticism of mine on 'Westward Ho!'—"I suppose you are right as to Amyas and his mother; I will see to it. You are probably right too about John Hawkins. The letter in Purchas is to me unknown, but your conception agrees with a picture my father says he has seen of Captain John (he thinks at Lord Anglesey's, at Beaudesert) as a prim, hard, terrier-faced, little fellow, with a sharp chin, and a dogged Puritan eye. So perhaps I am wrong: but I don't think *that* very important, for there must have been sea-dogs of my stamp in plenty too." Then, referring to the Crimean war—"I don't say that the two cases are parallel. I don't ask England to hate Russia as she was bound to hate Spain, as God's enemy; but I do think that a little Tudor pluck and Tudor democracy (paradoxical as the word may seem, and inconsistently as it was carried out then) is just what we want now."

"Tummas! Have you read the story of Abou Zennab, his horse, in Stanley's 'Sinai,' p. 67? What a myth! What a poem old Wordsworth would have writ thereon! If I didn't cry like a babby over it. What a brick of a horse he must have been, and what a brick of an old

head-splitter Abou Zennab must have been, to have his commandments keeped unto this day concerning of his horse; and no one to know who he was, nor when, nor how, nor nothing. I wonder if anybody 'll keep *our* commandments after we be gone, much less say, 'Eat, eat, O horse of Abou Kingsley!'"

By this time the success of "Westward Ho!" and "Hypatia" had placed him in the first rank of English writers. His fame as an author, and his character as a man, had gained him a position which might well have turned any man's head. There were those amongst his intimate friends who feared that it might be so with him, and who were faithful enough to tell him so. And I cannot conclude this sketch better than by giving his answer to that one of them with whom he had been most closely associated in the time when, as Parson Lot, every man's hand had been against him—

"My Dear Ludlow,

"And for this fame, &c.,

"I know a little of her worth.

"And I will tell you what I know.

"That, in the first place, she is a fact, and as such, it is not wise to ignore her, but at least to walk once round her, and see her back as well as her front.

"The case to me seems to be this. A man feels in himself the love of praise. Every man does who is not a brute. It is a universal human faculty; Carlyle nicknames it the sixth sense. Who made it? God or the devil? Is it flesh or spirit? a difficult question; because tamed animals grow to possess it in a high degree; and our metaphysician does not yet allow them spirit. But, whichever it be, it cannot be for bad: only bad when misdirected, and not controlled by reason, the faculty which judges between good and evil. Else why has God put His love of praise into the heart of every child which is born into the world, and entwined it into the holiest filial and family affections, as the earliest mainspring of good actions? Has God appointed that every child shall

be fed first with a necessary lie, and afterwards come to the knowledge of your supposed truth, that the praise of God alone is to be sought? Or are we to believe that the child is intended to be taught as delicately and gradually as possible the painful fact, that the praise of all men is not equally worth having, and to use his critical faculty to discern the praise of good men from the praise of bad, to seek the former and despise the latter? I should say that the last was the more reasonable. And this I will say, that if you bring up any child to care nothing for the praise of its parents, its elders, its pastors, and masters, you may make a fanatic of it, or a shameless cynic: but you will neither make it a man, an Englishman, or a Christian.

"But 'our Lord's words stand, about not seeking the honour which comes from men, but the honour which comes from God only!' True, they do stand, and our Lord's fact stands also, the fact that He has created every child to be educated by an honour which comes from his parents and elders. Both are true. Here, as in most spiritual things, you have an antinomia, an apparent contradiction, which nothing but the Gospel solves. And it does solve it; and your one-sided view of the text resolves itself into just the same fallacy as the old ascetic one. 'We must love God alone, therefore we must love no created thing.' To which St. John answers pertinently 'He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' If you love your brethren, you love Christ in them. If you love their praise, you love the praise of Christ in them. For consider this, you cannot deny that, if one loves any person, one desires that person's esteem. But we are bound to love all men, and that is our highest state. Therefore, in our highest state, we shall desire all men's esteem. Paradoxical, but true. If we believe in Christmas-day; if we believe in Whitsunday, we shall believe that Christ is in all men, that God's spirit is abroad in the earth, and therefore the dispraise, misunderstanding, and calumny of men will be exquisitely painful to us, and ought to be so; and, on the other hand, the esteem of

men, and renown among men for doing good deeds will be inexpressibly precious to us. They will be signs and warrants to us that God is pleased with us, that we are sharing in that "honour and glory" which Paul promises again and again, with no such scruples as yours, to those who lead heroic lives. We shall not neglect the voice of God within us; but we shall remember that there is also a voice of God without us, which we must listen to; and that in a Christian land, *vox populi*, patiently and discriminately listened to, is sure to be found not far off from the *vox Dei*.

"Now, let me seriously urge this last fact on you. Of course, in listening to the voice of the man outside there is a danger, as there is in the use of any faculty. You may employ it, according to Divine reason and grace, for ennobling and righteous purposes; or you may degrade it to carnal and selfish ones; so you may degrade the love of praise into vanity, into longing for the honour which comes from men, by pandering to their passions and opinions, by using your powers as they would too often like to use theirs, for mere self-aggrandisement, by saying in your heart—*quam pulchrum digito monstrari et diceri hic est.* That is the man who wrote the fine poem, who painted the fine picture, and so forth, till, by giving way to this, a man may give way to forms of vanity as base as the red Indian who sticks a fox's tail on, and dances about boasting of his brute cunning. I know all about that, as well as any poor son of Adam ever did. But I know, too, that to desire the esteem of as many rational men as possible; in a word, to desire an honourable and true renown for having done good in my generation, has nothing to do with that; and the more I fear and struggle against the former, the more I see the exceeding beauty and divineness, and everlasting glory of the latter as an entrance into the communion of saints.

"Of course, all this depends on whether we do believe that Christ is in every man, and that God's spirit is abroad in the earth. Of course, again, it will be very difficult to know who speaks by God's spirit, and who

sees by Christ's light in him; but surely the wiser, the humbler path, is to give men credit for as much wisdom and rightness as possible, and to believe that when one is found fault with, one is probably in the wrong. For myself, on looking back, I see clearly with shame and sorrow, that the obloquy which I have brought often on myself and on the good cause, has been almost all of it my own fault—that I have given the devil and bad men a handle, not by caring what people would say, but by *not caring*—by fancying that I was a very grand fellow, who was going to speak what I knew to be true, in spite of all fools (and really did and do intend so to do), while all the while I was deceiving myself, and unaware of a canker at the heart the very opposite to the one against which you warn me. I mean the proud, self-willed, self-conceited spirit which made no allowance for other men's weakness or ignorance; nor again, for their superior experience and wisdom on points which I had never considered—which took a pride in shocking and startling, and defying, and hitting as hard as I could, and fancied, blasphemously, as I think, that the word of God had come to me only, and went out from me only. God forgive me for these sins, as well as for my sins in the opposite direction; but for these sins especially, because I see them to be darker and more dangerous than the others.

"For there has been gradually revealed to me (what my many readings in the lives of fanatics and ascetics ought to have taught me long before), that there is a terrible gulf ahead of that not caring what men say. Of course it is a feeling on which the spirit must fall back in hours of need, and cry, 'Thou, God, knowest mine integrity. I have believed, and therefore I will speak; thou art true, though all men be liars!' But I am convinced that that is a frame in which no man can live, or is meant to live; that it is only to be resorted to in fear and trembling, after deepest self-examination, and self-purification, and earnest prayer. For otherwise, Ludlow, a man gets to forget that voice of God without him, in his determination to

listen to nothing but the voice of God within him, and so he falls into two dangers. He forgets that there *is* a voice of God without him. He loses trust in, and charity to, and reverence for his fellow-men; he learns to despise, deny, and quench the Spirit, and to despise prophesyings, and so becomes gradually cynical, sectarian, fanatical.

"And then comes a second and worse danger. Crushed into self, and his own conscience and *schema mundi*, he loses the opportunity of correcting his impression of the voice of God within, by the testimony of the voice of God without; and so he begins to mistake more and more the voice of that very flesh of his, which he fancies he has conquered, for the voice of God, and to become, without knowing it, an autotheist. And out of that springs eclecticism, absence of tenderness *for* men, for want of sympathy *with* men; as he makes his own conscience his standard for God, so he makes his own character the standard for men; and so he becomes narrow, hard, and if he be a man of strong will and feelings, often very inhuman and cruel. This is the history of thousands—of Jeromes, Lauds, Puritans who scourged Quakers, Quakers who cursed Puritans; nonjurors, who though they would die rather than offend their own conscience in owning William, would plot with James to murder William, or to devastate England with Irish Rapparees and Auvergne dragoons. This, in fact, is the spiritual diagnosis of those many pious persecutors, who though neither hypocrites or blackguards themselves, have used both as instruments of their fanaticism.

"Against this I have to guard myself, you little know how much, and to guard my children still more, brought up, as they will be, under a father, who, deeply discontented with the present generation, cannot but express that discontent at times. To make my children '*banausoi*,' insolent and scoffing radicals, believing in nobody and nothing but themselves, would be perfectly easy in me if I were to make the watchword of my house, 'Never mind what people say.' On the contrary, I shall teach them that there are plenty of good

people in the world; that public opinion has pretty surely an undercurrent of the water of life, below all its froth and garbage; and that in a Christian country like this, where, with all faults, a man (sooner or later) has fair play and a fair hearing, the esteem of good men, and the blessings of the poor, will be a pretty sure sign that they have the blessing of God also; and I shall tell them, when they grow older, that ere they feel called on to become martyrs, in defending the light within them against all the world, they must first have taken care most patiently, and with all self-distrust and humility, to make full use of the light which is around them, and has been here for ages before them, and would be here still, though they had never been born or thought of. The antinomy between this and their own conscience may be painful enough to them some day. To what thinking man is it not a life-long battle? but I shall not dream that by denying one pole of the antinomy I can solve it, or do anything but make them, by cynicism or fanaticism, bury their talent in the earth, and *not* do the work which God has given them to do, because they will act like a parson who, before beginning his sermon, should first kick his congregation out of doors, and turn the key; and not like St. Paul, who became all things to all men, if by any means he might save some.

"Yours ever affectionately, with all Christmas blessings,

"C. KINGSLEY.

"FARLY COURT, *December* 26, 1855.

"I should be very much obliged to you to show this letter to Maurice."

One more letter only I will add, dated about the end of the "Parson Lot" period. He had written to inform me that one of the old Chartist leaders, a very worthy fellow, was in great distress, and to ask me to do what I could for him. In my reply I had alluded somewhat bitterly to the apparent failure of the Association movement in London, and to some of our blunders, acknowledging how

he had often seen the weak places, and warned us against them. His answer came by return of post:—

"EVERSLEY, *May*, 1856.

"DEAR TOM,—It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest; and don't cry stinking fish, neither don't hollow till you're out of the wood—which you oughtn't to have called yourself Tom fool, and blasphemed the holy name thereby, till you knowed you was sich, which you wasn't, as appears by particulars. And I have heard from T—— twice to-day, and he is agreeable, which, if he wasn't, he is an ass, and don't know half a loaf is better than no bread, and you musn't look a gift horse in the mouth, but all is as right as a dog-fox down wind and vi. *millia passuum* to the next gorse. But this £25 of his is a grueller, and I learnt with interest that you are inclined to get the fishes nose out of the weed. I have offered to lend him £10—hopes it may be lending—and have written a desperate begging letter to R. Monckton Milnes, Esq., which 'evins prosper. Poor T——— says to-night that he has written to Forster about it—which he must have the small of his back very hard against the ropes so to do, so the sooner we get the ginger-beer bottle out the longer he'll fight, or else he'll throw up the sponge at once; for I know his pride. I think we can raise it somehow. I have a last card in old ———, the judge who tried and condemned him, and is the dearest old soul alive, only he will have it T—— showed dunghill, and don't carry a real game nackle. • If I am to tackle he you must send me back those letters to appeal to his piety and 'joys as does abound,' as your incomparable father remarks. When *will* you give me that canticle? He says Tom Taylor (I believe all the world is called Thomas) has behaved to him like a brother, which, indeed, was to be expexed, and has promised him copying at a shilling an hour, and *will* give him a chop daily free gracious; but the landlord won't wait, which we musn't neither.

"Now, business afore pleasure. You are an old darling, and who says no, I'd kick him, if it warn't for my cloth; but you are green in cottoning to me about our '48 mess.

Because why? I lost nothing—I risked nothing. You fellows worked like bricks, spent money, and got midshipman's half-pay (nothing a-day and find yourself), and monkey's allowance (more kicks than halfpence). I risked no money; 'cause why, I had none; but *made* money out of the movement, and fame too. I've often thought what a dirty beast I was. I made £150 by Alton Locke, and never lost a farthing; and I got, not in spite of, but by the rows, a name and a standing with many a one who would never have heard of me otherwise, and I should have been a stercoraceous mendicant if I had hollowed when I got a facer, while I was winning by the cross, though I didn't mean to fight one. No. And if I'd had £100,000, I'd have, and should have, staked and lost it all in 1848–50. I should, Tom, for my heart was and is in it, and you'll see it will beat yet; but we ain't the boys. We don't see but half the bull's eye yet, and don't see *at all* the policeman which is a going on his beat behind the bull's eye, and no thanks to us. Still, *some* somedever, it's in the fates, that Association is the pure caseine, and must be eaten by the human race if it would save its soul alive, which, indeed, it will; only don't you think me a good fellow for not crying out, when I never had more to do than scratch myself and away went the fleas. But you all were real bricks; and if you were riled, why let him that is without sin cast the first stone, or let me cast it for him, and see if I don't hit him in the eye.

"Now to business; I have had a sortér kindèr sample day. Up at 5, to see a dying man; ought to have been up at 2, but Ben King the rat-catcher, who came to call me, was taken nervous!!! and didn't make row enough; was from 5.30 to 6.30 with the most dreadful case of agony—insensible to me, but not to his pain. Came home, got a wash and a pipe, and again to him at 8. Found him insensible to his own pain, with dilated pupils, dying of pressure of the brain—going any moment. Prayed the commendatory prayers over him, and started for the river with West. Fished all the morning in a roaring N.E. gale, with the dreadful agonized face between me and the river, pondering on THE mystery. Killed eight on 'March

brown' and 'governor,' by drowning the flies, and taking *'em out gently to see* if ought was there—which is the only dodge in a north-easter. 'Cause why? The water is warmer than the air—*ergo*, fishes don't like to put their noses out o' doors, and feeds at home down stairs. It is the only wrinkle, Tom. The captain fished a-top, and caught but three all day. They weren't going to catch a cold in their heads to please him or any man. Clouds burn up at 1 P.M. I put on a minnow, and kill three more; I should have had lots, but for the image of the dirty hickory stick, which would 'walk the waters like a thing of life,' just ahead of my minnow. Mem.—Never fish with the sun in your back; it's bad enough with a fly, but with a minnow it's strichnine and prussic acid. My eleven weighed together four and a-half pounds—three to the pound; not good, considering I had spased many a two-pound fish, I *know*.

"Corollary.—Brass minnow don't suit the water. Where is your wonderful minnow? Send him me down, or else a *horn* one, which I believes in desperate; but send me something before Tuesday, and I will send you P.O.O. Horn minnow looks like a gudgeon, which is the pure caseine. One pounder I caught to-day on the 'March brown' womited his wittles, which was rude, but instructive; and among worms was a gudgeon three inches long and more. Blow minnows—gudgeon is the thing.

"Came off the water at 3. Found my man alive, and, thank God, quiet. Sat with him, and thought him going once or twice. What a mystery that long, insensible death-struggle is! Why should they be so long about it? Then had to go Hartley Row for an Archdeacon's Sunday-school meeting—three hours useless (I fear) speechifying and 'shop'; but the Archdeacon is a good man, and works like a brick beyond his office. Got back at 10·30, and sit writing to you. So goes one's day. All manner of incongruous things to do—and the very incongruity keeps one beany and jolly. Your letter was delightful. I read part of it to West, who says, you are the best fellow on earth, to which I agree.

"So no more from your sleepy and tired—C. KINGSLEY."

This was almost the last letter I ever received from him in the Parson Lot period of his life, with which alone this notice has to do. It shows, I think, very clearly that it was not that he had deserted his flag (as has been said) or changed his mind about the cause for which he had fought so hard and so well. His heart was in it still as warmly as ever, as he says himself. But the battle had rolled away to another part of the field. Almost all that Parson Lot had ever striven for was already gained. The working-classes had already got statutory protection for their trade associations, and their unions, though still outside the law, had become strong enough to fight their own battles. And so he laid aside his fighting name and his fighting pen, and had leisure to look calmly on the great struggle more as a spectator than an actor.

A few months later, in the summer of 1856, when he and I were talking over and preparing for a week's fishing in the streams and lakes of his favourite Snowdonia, he spoke long and earnestly in the same key. I well remember how he wound it all up with, "the long and short of it is, I am becoming an optimist. All men, worth anything, old men especially, have strong fits of optimism —even Carlyle has—because they can't help hoping, and sometimes feeling, that the world is going right, and will go right, not your way, or my way, but its own way. Yes; we've all tried our Holloway's Pills, Tom, to cure all the ills of all the world—and we've all found out I hope by this time that the tough old world has more in its inside than any Holloway's Pills will clear out." A few weeks later I received the following invitation to Snowdon, and to Snowdon we went in the autumn of 1856.

THE INVITATION.

COME away with me, Tom,
Term and talk is done;
My poor lads are reaping,
Busy every one.
Curates mind the parish,
Sweepers mind the Court,

We'll away to Snowdon
For our ten days' sport,
Fish the August evening
Till the eve is past,
Whoop like boys at pounders
Fairly played and grassed.
When they cease to dimple,
Lunge, and swerve, and leap,
Then up over Siabod
Choose our nest, and sleep.
Up a thousand feet, Tom,
Round the lion's head,
Find soft stones to leeward
And make up our bed.
Eat our bread and bacon,
Smoke the pipe of peace,
And, ere we be drowsy,
Give our boots a grease.
Homer's heroes did so,
Why not such as we?
What are sheets and servants?
Superfluity.
Pray for wives and children
Safe in slumber curled,
Then to chat till midnight
O'er this babbling world.
Of the workmen's college,
Of the price of grain,
Of the tree of knowledge,
Of the chance of rain;
If Sir A. goes Romeward,
If Miss B. sings true,
If the fleet comes homeward,
If the mare will do,—
Anything and everything—
Up there in the sky
Angels understand us,
And no "*saints*" are by.
Down, and bathe at day-dawn,
Tramp from lake to lake,
Washing brain and heart clean
Every step we take.

Leave to Robert Browning
Beggars, fleas, and vines;
Leave to mournful Ruskin
Popish Apennines,
Dirty Stones of Venice
And his Gas-lamps Seven;
We've the stones of Snowdon
And the lamps of heaven.
Where's the mighty credit
In admiring Alps?
Any goose sees "glory"
In their "snowy scalps."
Leave such signs and wonders
For the dullard brain,
As æsthetic brandy,
Opium, and cayenne;
Give me Bramshill common
(St. John's harriers by),
Or the vale of Windsor,
England's golden eye.
Show me life and progress,
Beauty, health, and man;
Houses fair, trim gardens,
Turn where'er I can.
Or, if bored with "High Art,"
And such popish stuff,
One's poor ears need airing,
Snowdon's high enough.
While we find God's signet
Fresh on English ground,
Why go gallivanting
With the nations round?
Though we try no ventures
Desperate or strange;
Feed on common-places
In a narrow range;
Never sought for Franklin
Round the frozen Capes;
Even, with Macdougall,
Bagged our brace of apes;
Never had our chance, Tom,
In that black Redan;

Can't avenge poor Brereton
Out in Sakarran;
Tho' we earn our bread, Tom,
By the dirty pen,
What we can we will be,
Honest Englishmen.
Do the work that's nearest,
Though it's dull at whiles;
Helping, when we meet them
Lame dogs over stiles;
See in every hedgerow
Marks of angels' feet,
Epics in each pebble
Underneath our feet;
Once a-year, like schoolboys,
Robin-Hooding go,
Leaving fops and fogies
A thousand feet below.

T. H.

CHEAP CLOTHES AND NASTY.

KING RYENCE, says the legend of Prince Arthur, wore a paletot trimmed with kings' beards. In the first French Revolution (so Carlyle assures us) there were at Meudon tanneries of human skins. Mammon, at once tyrant and revolutionary, follows both these noble examples—in a more respectable way, doubtless, for Mammon hates cruelty; bodily pain is his devil—the worst evil of which he, in his effeminacy, can conceive. So he shrieks benevolently when a drunken soldier is flogged; but he trims his paletots, and adorns his legs, with the flesh of men and the skins of women, with degradation, pestilence, heathendom, and despair; and then chuckles self-complacently over the smallness of his tailors' bills. Hypocrite!—straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel! What is flogging, or hanging, King Ryence's paletot, or the tanneries of Meudon, to the slavery, starvation, waste of life, year-long imprisonment in dungeons narrower and fouler than those of the Inquisition, which goes on among thousands of free English clothes-makers at this day?

"The man is mad," says Mammon, smiling supercilious pity. Yes, Mammon; mad as Paul before Festus; and for much the same reason, too. Much learning has made us mad. From two articles in the "Morning Chronicle" of Friday, Dec. 14th, and Tuesday, Dec. 18th, on the Condi-

tion of the Working Tailors, we learnt too much to leave us altogether masters of ourselves. But there is method in our madness; we can give reasons for it—satisfactory to ourselves, perhaps also to Him who made us, and you, and all tailors likewise. Will you, freshly bedizened, you and your footmen, from Nebuchadnezzar and Co.'s "Emporium of Fashion," hear a little about how your finery is made? You are always calling out for facts, and have a firm belief in salvation by statistics. Listen to a few.

The Metropolitan Commissioner of the "Morning Chronicle" called two meetings of the Working Tailors, one in Shadwell, and the other at the Hanover Square Rooms, in order to ascertain their condition from their own lips. Both meetings were crowded. At the Hanover Square Rooms there were more than one thousand men; they were altogether unanimous in their descriptions of the misery and slavery which they endured. It appears that there are two distinct tailor trades—the "honourable" trade, now almost confined to the West End, and rapidly dying out there, and the "dishonourable" trade of the show-shops and slop-shops—the plate-glass palaces, where gents—and, alas! those who would be indignant at that name—buy their cheap-and-nasty clothes. The two names are the tailors' own slang; slang is true and expressive enough, though, now and then. The honourable shops in the West End number only sixty; the dishonourable, four hundred and more; while at the East End the dishonourable trade has it all its own way. The honourable part of the trade is declining at the rate of one hundred and fifty journeymen per year; the dishonourable increasing at such a rate that, in twenty years it will have absorbed the whole tailoring trade, which employs upwards of twenty-one thousand journeymen. At the honourable shops the work is done, as it was universally thirty years ago, on the premises and at good wages. In the dishonourable trade, the work is taken home by the men, to be done at the very lowest possible prices, which decrease year by year, almost month by month. At the honourable shops, from 36*s.* to 24*s.* is paid for a piece of work for which the

dishonourable shop pays from 22*s.* to 9*s.* But not to the workmen; happy is he if he really gets two-thirds, or half of that. For at the honourable shops, the master deals directly with his workmen; while at the dishonourable ones, the greater part of the work, if not the whole, is let out to contractors, or middle-men—"*sweaters*," as their victims significantly call them—who, in their turn, let it out again, sometimes to the workmen, sometimes to fresh middlemen; so that out of the price paid for labour on each article, not only the workmen, but the sweater, and perhaps the sweater's sweater, and a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, have to draw their profit. And when the labour price has been already beaten down to the lowest possible, how much remains for the workmen after all these deductions, let the poor fellows themselves say!

One working tailor (at the Hanover Square Rooms Meeting) "mentioned a number of shops, both at the east and west ends, whose work was all taken by sweaters; and several of these shops were under royal and noble patronage. There was one notorious sweater who kept his carriage. He was a Jew, and, of course, he gave a preference to his own sect. Thus, another Jew received it from him second hand and at a lower rate; then it went to a third—till it came to the unfortunate Christian at perhaps the eighth rate, and he performed the work at barely living prices; this same Jew required a deposit of 5*l.* in money before he would give out a single garment to be made. He need not describe the misery which this system entailed upon the workmen. It was well known, but it was almost impossible, except for those who had been at the two, to form an idea of the difference between the present meeting and one at the East-end, where all who attended worked for slop-shops and sweaters. The present was a highly respectable assembly; the other presented no other appearance but those of misery and degradation."

Another says—"We have all worked in the honourable trade, so we know the regular prices from our own personal experience. Taking the bad work with the good work we might earn 11*s.* a week upon an average. Sometimes we do earn as much as 15*s.*; but, to do this,

we are obliged to take part of our work home to our wives and daughters. We are not always fully employed. We are nearly half our time idle. Hence, our earnings are, upon an average throughout the year, not more than 5*s.* 6*d.* a week." "Very often I have made only 3*s.* 4*d.* in the week," said one. "That's common enough with us all, I can assure you," said another. "Last week my wages was 7*s.* 6*d.*," declared one. "I earned 6*s.* 4*d.*," exclaimed the second. "My wages came to 9*s.* 2*d.* The week before I got 6*s.* 3*d.*" "I made 7*s.* 9*d.*," and "I 7*s.* or 8*s.*, I can't exactly remember which." "This is what we term the best part of our winter season. The reason why we are so long idle is because more hands than are wanted are kept on the premises, so that in case of a press of work coming in, our employers can have it done immediately. Under the day work system no master tailor had more men on the premises than he could keep continually going; but since the change to the piece-work system, masters made a practice of engaging double the quantity of hands that they have any need for, so that an order may be executed 'at the shortest possible notice,' if requisite. A man must not leave the premises when unemployed,—if he does, he loses his chance of work coming in. I have been there four days together, and had not a stitch of work to do." "Yes; that is common enough." "Ay, and then you're told, if you complain, you can go, if you don't like it. I am sure twelve hands would do all they have done at home, and yet they keep forty of us. It's generally remarked that, however strong and healthy a man may be when he goes to work at that shop, in a month's time he'll be a complete shadow, and have almost all his clothes in pawn. By Sunday morning, he has no money at all left, and he has to subsist till the following Saturday upon about a pint of weak tea, and four slices of bread and butter per day!!!"

"Another of the reasons for the sweaters keeping more hands than they want is, the men generally have their meals with them. The more men they have with them the more breakfasts and teas they supply, and the more profit they make. The men usually have to pay 4*d.*, and

very often 5*d.* for their breakfast, and the same for their tea. The tea or breakfast is mostly a pint of tea or coffee, and three to four slices of bread and butter. *I worked for one sweater who almost starved the men; the smallest eater there would not have had enough if he had got three times as much. They had only three thin slices of bread and butter, not sufficient for a child, and the tea was both weak and bad. The whole meal could not have stood him in* 2*d.* *a head, and what made it worse was, that the men who worked there couldn't afford to have dinners, so that they were starved to the bone.* The sweater's men generally lodge where they work. A sweater usually keeps about six men. These occupy two small garrets; one room is called the kitchen, and the other the workshop; and here the whole of the six men, and the sweater, his wife, and family, live and sleep. One sweater *I worked with had four children and six men, and they, together with his wife, sister-in-law, and himself, all lived in two rooms, the largest of which was about eight feet by ten. We worked in the smallest room and slept there as well—all six of us. There were two turn-up beds in it, and we slept three in a bed. There was no chimney, and, indeed, no ventilation whatever. I was near losing my life there—the foul air of so many people working all day in the place, and sleeping there at night, was quite suffocating. Almost all the men were consumptive, and I myself attended the dispensary for disease of the lungs. The room in which we all slept was not more than six feet square. We were all sick and weak, and loth to work.* Each of the six of us paid 2*s.* 6*d.* a week for our lodging, or 15*s.* altogether, and I am sure such a room as we slept and worked in might be had for 1*s.* a week; you can get a room with a fire-place for 1*s.* 6*d.* a week. The usual sum that the men working for sweaters pay for their tea, breakfasts, and lodging is 6*s.* 6*d.* to 7*s.* a week, and they seldom earn more money in the week. Occasionally at the week's end they are in debt to the sweater. This is seldom for more than 6*d.*, for the sweater will not give them victuals if he has no work for them to do. Many who live and work at the

sweater's are married men, and are obliged to keep their wives and children in lodgings by themselves. Some send them to the workhouse, others to their friends in the country. Besides the profit of the board and lodging, the sweater takes 6*d.* out of the price paid for every garment under 10*s.*; some take 1*s.*, and I do know of one who takes as much as 2*s.* This man works for a large show-shop at the West End. The usual profit of the sweater, over and above the board and lodging, is 2*s.* out of every pound. Those who work for sweaters soon lose their clothes, and are unable to seek for other work, because they have not a coat to their back to go and seek it in. *Last week, I worked with another man at a coat for one of her Majesty's ministers, and my partner never broke his fast while he was making his half of it.* The minister dealt at a cheap West End show-shop. All the workman had the whole day-and-a-half he was making the coat was a little tea. But sweaters' work is not so bad as government work after all. At that, we cannot make more than 4*s.* or 5*s.* a week altogether—that is, counting the time we are running after it, of course. *Government contract work is the worst of all, and the starved-out and sweated-out tailor's last resource.* But still, government does not do the regular trade so much harm as the cheap show and slop shops. These houses have ruined thousands. They have cut down the prices, so that men cannot live at the work; and the masters who did and would pay better wages, are reducing the workmen's pay every day. They say they must either compete with the large show shops or go into the 'Gazette.'"

Sweet competition! Heavenly maid!—Now-a-days hymned alike by penny-a-liners and philosophers as the ground of all society—the only real preserver of the earth! Why not of Heaven, too? Perhaps there is competition among the angels, and Gabriel and Raphael have won their rank by doing the maximum of worship on the minimum of grace? We shall know some day. In the meanwhile, "these are thy works, thou parent of all good!" Man eating man, eaten by man, in every

variety of degree and method! Why does not some enthusiastic political economist write an epic on "The Consecration of Cannibalism"?

But if any one finds it pleasant to his soul to believe the poor journeymen's statements exaggerated, let him listen to one of the sweaters themselves:—

"I wish," says he, "that others did for the men as decently as I do. I know there are many who are living entirely upon them. Some employ as many as fourteen men. I myself worked in the house of a man who did this. The chief part of us lived, and worked, and slept together in two rooms, on the second floor. They charged 2*s.* 6*d.* per head for the lodging alone. Twelve of the workmen, I am sure, lodged in the house, and these paid altogether 30*s.* a week rent to the sweater. I should think the sweater paid 8*s.* a week for the rooms —so that he gained at least 22*s.* clear out of the lodging of these men, and stood at no rent himself. For the living of the men he charged—5*d.* for breakfasts, and the same for teas, and 8*d.* for dinner—or at the rate of 10*s.* 6*d.* each per head. Taking one with the other, and considering the manner in which they lived, I am certain that the cost for keeping each of them could not have been more than 5*s.* This would leave 5*s.* 6*d.* clear profit on the board of each of the twelve men, or, altogether, £3, 6*s.* per week; and this, added to the £1, 2*s.* profit on the rent, would give £4, 8*s.* for the sweater's gross profit on the board and lodging of the workmen in his place. But, besides this, he got 1*s.* out of each coat made on his premises, and there were twenty-one coats made there, upon an average, every week; so that, altogether, the sweater's clear gains out of the men were £5, 9*s.* every week. Each man made about a coat and a half in the course of the seven days (*for they all worked on a Sunday—they were generally told to 'borrow a day off the Lord.'*) For this coat and a half each hand got £1, 2*s.* 6*d.*, and out of it he had to pay 13*s.* for board and lodging; so that there was 9*s.* 6*d.* clear left. These are the profits of the sweater, and the earnings of the men engaged under him, when working for the first rate houses. But many of the

cheap houses pay as low as 8*s.* for the making of each dress and frock coat, and some of them as low as 6*s.* Hence the earnings of the men at such work would be from 9*s.* to 12*s.* per week, and the cost of their board and lodging without dinners, for these they seldom have, would be from 7*s.* 6*d.* to 8*s.* per week. Indeed, the men working under sweaters at such prices generally consider themselves well off if they have a shilling or two in their pockets for Sunday. The profits of the sweater, however, would be from £4 to £5 out of twelve men, working on his premises. The usual number of men working under each sweater is about six individuals; and the average rate of profit, about £2, 10*s.*, without the sweater doing any work himself. It is very often the case that a man working under a sweater is obliged to pawn his own coat to get any pocket-money that he may require. Over and over again the sweater makes out that he is in his debt from 1*s.* to 2*s.* at the end of the week, and when the man's coat is in pledge, he is compelled to remain imprisoned in the sweater's lodgings for months together. In some sweating places, there is an old coat kept called a "reliever," and this is borrowed by such men as have none of their own to go out in. There are very few of the sweaters' men who have a coat to their backs or a shoe to their feet to come out into the streets on Sunday. Down about Fulwood's Rents, Holborn, I am sure I would not give 6*d.* for the clothes that are on a dozen of them; and it is surprising to me, working and living together in such numbers and in such small close rooms, in narrow close back courts as they do, that they are not all swept off by some pestilence. I myself have seen half-a-dozen men at work in a room that was a little better than a bedstead long. It was as much as one could do to move between the wall and the bedstead when it was down. There were two bedsteads in this room, and they nearly filled the place when they were down. The ceiling was so low, that I couldn't stand upright in the room. There was no ventilation in the place. There was no fireplace, and only a small window. When the window was open, you could nearly touch the houses at the back, and if the

room had not been at the top of the house, the men could not have seen at all in the place. The staircase was so narrow, steep, and dark, that it was difficult to grope your way to the top of the house—it was like going up a steeple. This is the usual kind of place in which the sweater's men are lodged. The reason why there are so many Irishmen working for the sweaters is, because they are seduced over to this country by the prospect of high wages and plenty of work. They are brought over by the Cork boats at 10*s.* a-head, and when they once get here, the prices they receive are so small, that they are unable to go back. In less than a week after they get here, their clothes are all pledged, and they are obliged to continue working under the sweaters.

"The extent to which this system of 'street kidnapping' is carried on is frightful. Young tailors, fresh from the country, are decoyed by the sweaters' wives into their miserable dens, under extravagant promises of employment, to find themselves deceived, imprisoned, and starved, often unable to make their escape for months —perhaps years; and then only fleeing from one dungeon to another as abominable."

In the meantime, the profits of the beasts of prey who live on these poor fellows—both masters and sweaters—seem as prodigious as their cruelty.

Hear another working tailor on this point:—"In 1844, I belonged to the honourable part of the trade. Our house of call supplied the present show-shop with men to work on the premises. The prices then paid were at the rate of 6*d.* per hour. For the same driving capes that they paid 18*s.* then, they give only 12*s.* for now. For the dress and frock coats they gave 15*s.* then, and now they are 14*s.* The paletots and shooting coats were 12*s.*; there was no coat made on the premises under that sum. At the end of the season, they wanted to reduce the paletots to 9*s.* The men refused to make them at that price, when other houses were paying as much as 15*s.* for them. The consequence of this was, the house discharged all the men, and got a Jew middle-man from the neighbourhood of Petticoat-lane, to agree to do them

all at 7*s.* 6*d.* a piece. The Jew employed all the poor people who were at work for the slop warehouses in Houndsditch and its vicinity. This Jew makes on an average 500 paletots a week. The Jew gets 2*s.* 6*d.* profit out of each, and having no sewing trimmings allowed to him, he makes the work-people find them. The saving in trimmings alone to the firm, since the workmen left the premises, must have realized a small fortune to them. Calculating men, women, and children, I have heard it said that the cheap house at the West End employs 1,000 hands. The trimmings for the work done by these would be about 6*d.* a week per head, so that the saving to the house since the men worked on the premises has been no less than £1,300 a year, and all this taken out of the pockets of the poor. The Jew who contracts for making the paletots is no tailor at all. A few years ago he sold sponges in the street, and now he rides in his carriage. The Jew's profits are 500 half-crowns, or £60 odd, per week—that is upwards of £3,000 a-year. Women are mostly engaged at the paletot work. When I came to work for the cheap show-shop I had £5, 10*s.* in the saving bank; now I have not a half-penny in it. All I had saved went little by little to keep me and my family. I have always made a point of putting some money by when I could afford it, but since I have been at this work it has been as much as I could do to *live*, much more to *save*. One of the firm for which I work has been heard publicly to declare that he employed 1,000 hands constantly. Now the earnings of these at the honourable part of the trade would be upon an average, taking the skilful with the unskilful, 15*s.* a week each, or £39,000 a year. But since they discharged the men from off their premises, they have cut down the wages of the workmen one-half—taking one garment with another—*though the selling prices remain the same to the public*, so that they have saved by the reduction of the workmen's wages no less than £19,500 per year. Every other quarter of a year something has been 'docked' off our earnings, until it is almost impossible for men with families to live decently by their labour; and now, for the first time,

they pretend to feel for them. They even talk of erecting a school for the children of their workpeople; but where is the use of erecting schools, when they know as well as we do, that at the wages they pay, the children must be working for their fathers at home? They had much better erect workshops, and employ the men on the premises at fair living wages, and then the men could educate their own children, without being indebted to their charity."

On this last question of what the master-cannibals had "much better do," we have somewhat to say presently. In the meantime, hear another of the things which they had much better *not* do. "Part of the fraud and deception of the slop trade consists in the mode in which the public are made believe that the men working for such establishments earn more money than they really do. The plan practised is similar to that adopted by the army clothier, who made out that the men working on his establishment made per week from 15*s.* to 17*s.* each, whereas, on inquiry, it was found that a considerable sum was paid out of that to those who helped to do the looping for those who took it home. When a coat is given to me to make, a ticket is handed to me with the garment, similar to this one which I have obtained from a friend of mine.

448
Mr. *Smith* 6,675 Made by *M*
Ze = 12*s.* = *lined lustre*
quilted double stitched
each side seams

448. No. 6,675.
o'clock *Friday*
Mr. *Smith*

On this you see the price is marked at 12*s.*," continued my informant, "and supposing that I, with two others, could make three of these garments in the week, the sum of thirty-six shillings would stand in the books of the

establishment as the amount earned by me in that space of time. This would be sure to be exhibited to the customers, immediately that there was the least outcry made about the starvation price they paid for their work, as a proof that the workpeople engaged on their establishment received the full prices; whereas, of that 36*s.* entered against my name, *I should have had to pay* 24*s. to those who assisted me;* besides this, my share of the trimmings and expenses would have been 1*s.* 6*d.*, and probably my share of the fires would be 1*s.* more; so that the real fact would be, that I should make 9*s.* 6*d.* clear, and this it would be almost impossible to do, if I did not work long over hours. I am obliged to keep my wife continually at work helping me, in order to live."

In short, the condition of these men is far worse than that of the wretched labourers of Wilts or Dorset. Their earnings are as low and often lower; their trade requires a far longer instruction, far greater skill and shrewdness; their rent and food are more expensive; and their hours of work, while they have work, more than half as long again. Conceive sixteen or eighteen hours of skilled labour in a stifling and fetid chamber, earning not much more than 6*s.* 6*d.* or 7*s.* a week! And, as has been already mentioned in one case, the man who will earn even that, must work all Sunday. He is even liable to be thrown out of his work for refusing to work on Sunday. Why not? Is there anything about one idle day in seven to be found among the traditions of Mammon? When the demand comes, the supply must come; and will, in spite of foolish auld-warld notion about keeping days holy—or keeping contracts holy either, for, indeed, Mammon has no conscience—right and wrong are not words expressible by any commercial laws yet in vogue; and therefore it appears that to earn this wretched pittance is by no means to get it. "For," says one, and the practice is asserted to be general, almost universal, "there is at our establishment a mode of reducing the price of our labour even lower than we have mentioned. The prices we have stated are those *nominally* paid for making the garments; but it is not

an uncommon thing in our shop for a man to make a garment, and receive nothing at all for it. I remember a man once having a waistcoat to do, the price of making which was 2*s.*, and when he gave the job in he was told that he owed the establishment 6*d.* The manner in which this is brought about is by a system of fines. We are fined if we are behind time with our job, 6*d.* the first hour, and 3*d.* for each hour that we are late." "I have known as much as 7*s.* 6*d.* to be deducted off the price of a coat on the score of want of punctuality," one said; "and, indeed, very often the whole money is stopped. It would appear, as if our employers themselves strove to make us late with our work, and so have an opportunity of cutting down the price paid for our labour. They frequently put off giving out the trimmings to us till the time at which the coat is due has expired. If to the trimmer we return an answer that is considered 'saucy,' we are find 6*d.* or 1*s.*, according to the trimmer's temper." "I was called a thief," another of the three declared, "and because I told the man I would not submit to such language, I was fined 6*d.* These are the principal of the in-door fines. The out-door fines are still more iniquitous. There are full a dozen more fines for minor offences; indeed, we are fined upon every petty pretext. We never know what we have to take on a Saturday, for the meanest advantages are taken to reduce our wages. If we object to pay these fines, we are told that we may leave; but they know full well that we are afraid to throw ourselves out of work."

Folks are getting somewhat tired of the old rodomontade that a slave is free the moment he sets foot on British soil! Stuff!—are these tailors free? Put any conceivable sense you will on the word, and then say—are they free? We have, thank God, emancipated the black slaves; it would seem a not inconsistent sequel to that act to set about emancipating these white ones. Oh! we forgot; there is an infinite difference between the two cases—the black slaves worked for our colonies; the white slaves work for *us*. But, indeed, if, as some preach, self-interest is the mainspring of all human

action, it is difficult to see who will step forward to emancipate the said white slaves; for all classes seem to consider it equally their interest to keep them as they are; all classes, though by their own confession they are ashamed, are yet not afraid to profit by the system which keeps them down.

Not only the master tailors and their underlings, but the retail tradesmen, too, make their profit out of these abominations. By a method which smacks at first sight somewhat of benevolence, but proves itself in practice to be one of those "precious balms which break," not "the head" (for that would savour of violence, and might possibly give some bodily pain, a thing intolerable to the nerves of Mammon) but the heart—an organ which, being spiritual, can of course be recognized by no laws of police or commerce. The object of the State, we are told, is "the conservation of body and goods"; there is nothing in that about broken hearts; nothing which should make it a duty to forbid such a system as a working tailor here describes—

"Fifteen or twenty years ago, such a thing as a journeyman tailor having to give security before he could get work was unknown; but now I and such as myself could not get a stitch to do first handed, if we did not either procure the security of some householder, or deposit £5 in the hands of the employer. The reason of this is, the journeymen are so badly paid, that the employers know they can barely live on what they get, and consequently they are often driven to pawn the garments given out to them, in order to save themselves and their families from starving. If the journeyman can manage to scrape together £5, he has to leave it in the hands of his employer all the time that he is working for the house. I know one person who gives out the work for a fashionable West End slop-shop that will not take household security, and requires £5 from each hand. I am informed by one of the parties who worked for this man that he has as many as 150 hands in his employ, and that each of these has placed £5 in his hands, so that altogether the poor people have handed over £750 to increase the

capital upon which he trades, and for which he pays no interest whatsoever."

This recalls a similar case (mentioned by a poor stay-stitcher in another letter, published in the "Morning Chronicle"), of a large wholesale staymaker in the City, who had amassed a large fortune by beginning to trade upon the 5*s.* which he demanded to be left in his hands by his workpeople before he gave them employment.

"Two or three years back one of the slop-sellers at the East End became bankrupt, and the poor people lost all the money that had been deposited as security for work in his hands. The journeymen who get the security of householders are enabled to do so by a system which is now in general practice at the East End. Several bakers, publicans, chandler-shop keepers, and coal-shed keepers, make a trade of becoming security for those seeking slop-work. They consent to be responsible for the workpeople upon the condition of the men dealing at their shops. The workpeople who require such security are generally very good customers, from the fact of their either having large families, all engaged in the same work, or else several females or males working under them, and living at their house. The parties becoming securities thus not only greatly increase their trade, but furnish a second-rate article at a first-rate price. It is useless to complain of the bad quality or high price of the articles supplied by the securities, for the shopkeepers know, as well as the workpeople, that it is impossible for the hands to leave them without losing their work. I know one baker whose security was refused at the slop-shop because he was already responsible for so many, and he begged the publican to be his deputy, so that by this means the workpeople were obliged to deal at both baker's and publican's too. I never heard of a butcher making a trade of becoming security, *because the slopwork people cannot afford to consume much meat.*

"The same system is also pursued by lodging-house keepers. They will become responsible if the workmen requiring security will undertake to lodge at their house."

But of course the men most interested in keeping up the system are those who buy the clothes of these cheap shops. And who are they? Not merely the blackguard gent—the butt of Albert Smith and Punch, who flaunts at the Casinos and Cremorne Gardens in vulgar finery wrung out of the souls and bodies of the poor; not merely the poor lawyer's clerk or reduced half-pay officer who has to struggle to look as respectable as his class commands him to look on a pittance often no larger than that of the day labourer—no, strange to say—and yet not strange, considering our modern eleventh commandment—"Buy cheap and sell dear," the richest as well as the poorest imitate the example of King Ryence and the tanners of Meudon. At a great show establishment—to take one instance out of many—the very one where, as we heard just now, "however strong and healthy a man may be when he goes to work at that shop, in a month's time he will be a complete shadow, and have almost all his clothes in pawn"—

"We have also made garments for Sir —— ——, Sir —— ——, Alderman ——, Dr. ——, and Dr. ——. We make for several of the aristocracy. We cannot say whom, because the tickets frequently come to us as Lord —— and the Marquis of ——. This could not be a Jew's trick, because the buttons on the liveries had coronets upon them. And again, we know the house is patronized largely by the aristocracy, clergy, and gentry, by the number of court-suits and liveries, surplices, regimentals, and ladies' riding-habits that we continually have to make up. *There are more clergymen among the customers than any other class, and often we have to work at home upon the Sunday at their clothes, in order to get a living.* The customers are mostly ashamed of dealing at this house, for the men who take the clothes to the customers' houses in the cart have directions to pull up at the corner of the street. We had a good proof of the dislike of gentlefolks to have it known that they dealt at that shop for their clothes, for when the trousers buttons were stamped with the name of the firm, we used to have the garments returned, daily, to

have other buttons put on them, and now the buttons are unstamped"!!!

We shall make no comment on this extract. It needs none. If these men know how their clothes are made, they are past contempt. Afraid of man, and not afraid of God! As if His eye could not see the cart laden with the plunder of the poor, because it stopped round the corner! If, on the other hand, they do *not* know these things, and doubtless the majority do not,—it is their sin that they do not know it. Woe to a society whose only apology to God and man is, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Men ought to know the condition of those by whose labour they live. Had the question been the investment of a few pounds in a speculation, these gentlemen would have been careful enough about good security. Ought they to take no security when they invest their money in clothes, that they are not putting on their backs accursed garments, offered in sacrifice to devils, reeking with the sighs of the starving, tainted—yes, tainted, indeed, for it comes out now that diseases numberless are carried home in these same garments from the miserable abodes where they are made. Evidence to this effect was given in 1844; but Mammon was too busy to attend to it. These wretched creatures, when they have pawned their own clothes and bedding, will use as substitutes the very garments they are making. So Lord ——'s coat has been seen covering a group of children blotched with small-pox. The Rev. D—— finds himself suddenly unpresentable from a cutaneous disease, which it is not polite to mention on the south of Tweed, little dreaming that the shivering dirty being who made his coat has been sitting with his arms in the sleeves for warmth while he stitched at the tails. The charming Miss C—— is swept off by typhus or scarlatina, and her parents talk about "God's heavy judgment and visitation"—had they tracked the girl's new riding-habit back to the stifling undrained hovel where it served as a blanket to the fever-stricken slopworker, they would have seen *why* God had visited them, seen that His judgments are true judgments, and give His

plain opinion of the system which "speaketh good of the covetous whom God abhorreth"—a system, to use the words of the "Morning Chronicle's" correspondent, "unheard of and unparalleled in the history of any country—a scheme so deeply laid for the introduction and supply of under-paid labour to the market, that it is impossible for the working man not to sink and be degraded by it into the lowest depths of wretchedness and infamy—a system which is steadily and gradually increasing, and sucking more and more victims out of the honourable trade, who are really intelligent artizans, living in comparative comfort and civilization, into the dishonourable or sweating trade in which the slopworkers are generally almost brutified by their incessant toil, wretched pay, miserable food, and filthy homes."

But to us, almost the worse feature in the whole matter is, that the government are not merely parties to, but actually the originators of this system. The contract system, as a working tailor stated, in the name of the rest, "had been mainly instrumental in destroying the living wages of the working man. Now, the government were the sole originators of the system of contracts and of sweating. Forty years ago, there was nothing known of contracts, except government contracts; and at that period the contractors were confined to making slops for the navy, the army, and the West India slaves. It was never dreamt of then that such a system was to come into operation in the better classes of trade, till ultimately it was destructive of masters as well as men. The government having been the cause of the contract system, and consequently of the sweating system, he called upon them to abandon it. The sweating system had established the show shops and the ticket system, both of which were countenanced by the government, till it had become a fashion to support them.

"Even the court assisted to keep the system in fashion, and the royal arms and royal warrants were now exhibited common enough by slopsellers."

"Government said, its duty was to do justice. But was it consistent with justice to pay only 2*s.* 6*d.* for

making navy jackets, which would be paid 10s. for by every 'honourable' tradesman? Was it consistent with justice for the government to pay for Royal Marine clothing (private's coat and epaulettes) 1s. 9*d.*? Was it consistent with justice for the government to pay for making a pair of trousers (four or five hours' work) only 2½*d.*? And yet, when a contractor, noted for paying just wages to those he employed, brought this under the consideration of the Admiralty, they declared they had nothing to do with it. Here is their answer:—

Admiralty, March 19, 1847.

"Sir,—Having laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, your letter of the 8th inst., calling their attention to the extremely low prices paid for making up articles of clothing, provided for Her Majesty's naval service, I am commanded by their lordships to acquaint you, that they have no control whatever over the wages paid for making up contract clothing. Their duty is to take care that the articles supplied are of good quality, and well made: the cost of the material and the workmanship are matters which rest with the contractor; and if the public were to pay him a higher price than that demanded, it would not ensure any advantage to the men employed by him, as their wages depend upon the amount of competition for employment amongst themselves.

'I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

'H. G. WARD.

'W. Shaw, Esq.'

Oh most impotent conclusion, however officially cautious, and "philosophically" correct! Even if the wages did depend entirely on the amount of competition, on whom does the amount of competition depend? Merely on the gross numbers of the workmen? Somewhat, too, one would think, on the system according to which the labour and the wages are distributed. But right or wrong, is it not a pleasant answer for the poor working tailors, and one likely to increase their faith, hope, and charity towards the present commercial system, and those who deny the possibility of any other?

"The government," says another tailor at the same meeting, "had really been the means of reducing prices in the tailoring trade to so low a scale that no human being, whatever his industry, could live and be happy in his lot. The government were really responsible for the first introduction of female labour. He would clearly prove what he had stated. He would refer first to the army clothing. Our soldiers were comfortably clothed, as they had a right to be; but surely the men who made the clothing which was so comfortable, ought to be paid for their labour so as to be able to keep themselves comfortable and their families virtuous. But it was in evidence, that the persons working upon army clothing could not, upon an average, earn more than 1*s.* a-day. Another government department, the post-office, afforded a considerable amount of employment to tailors; but those who worked upon the post-office clothing earned, at the most, only 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day. The police clothing was another considerable branch of tailoring; this, like the others, ought to be paid for at living prices; but the men at work at it could only earn 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day, supposing them to work hard all the time, fourteen or fifteen hours. The Custom House clothing gave about the same prices. Now, all these sorts of work were performed by time workers, who, as a natural consequence of the wages they received, were the most miserable of human beings. Husband, wife, and family all worked at it; they just tried to breathe upon it; to live it never could be called. *Yet the same Government which paid such wretched wages, called upon the wretched people to be industrious, to be virtuous, and happy.* How was it possible, whatever their industry, to be virtuous and happy? The fact was, the men who, at the slack season, had been compelled to fall back upon these kinds of work, became so beggared and broken down by it, notwithstanding the assistance of their wives and families, that they were never able to rise out of it."

And now comes the question—What is to be done with these poor tailors, to the number of between fifteen and twenty thousand? Their condition, as it stands, is

simply one of ever-increasing darkness and despair. The system which is ruining them is daily spreading, deepening. While we write, fresh victims are being driven by penury into the slopworking trade, fresh depreciations of labour are taking place. Like Ulysses' companions in the cave of Polyphemus, the only question among them is, to scramble so far back as to have *a chance of being eaten at last.* Before them is ever-nearing slavery, disease, and starvation. What can be done?

First—this can be done. That no man who calls himself a Christian—no man who calls himself a man—shall ever disgrace himself by dealing at any show-shop or slop-shop. It is easy enough to know them. The ticketed garments, the impudent puffs, the trumpery decorations, proclaim them,—every one knows them at first sight, He who pretends not to do so, is simply either a fool or a liar. Let no man enter them—they are the temples of Moloch—their thresholds are rank with human blood. God's curse is on them, and on those who, by supporting them, are partakers of their sins. Above all, let no clergyman deal at them. Poverty—and many clergymen are poor—doubly poor, because society often requires them to keep up the dress of gentlemen on the income of an artizan; because, too, the demands on their charity are quadruple those of any other class—yet poverty is no excuse. The thing is damnable—not Christianity only, but common humanity cries out against it. Woe to those who dare to outrage in private the principles which they preach in public! God is not mocked; and his curse will find out the priest at the altar, as well as the nobleman in his castle.

But it is so hard to deprive the public of the luxury of cheap clothes! Then let the public look out for some other means of procuring that priceless blessing. If that, on experiment, be found impossible—if the comfort of the few be for ever to be bought by the misery of the many—if civilization is to benefit every one except the producing class—then this world is truly the devil's world, and the sooner so ill-constructed and infernal

a machine is destroyed by that personage, the better.

But let, secondly, a dozen, or fifty, or a hundred journeymen say to one another: "It is competition that is ruining us, and competition is division, disunion, every man for himself, every man against his brother. The remedy must be in association, co-operation, self-sacrifice for the sake of one another. We can work together at the honourable tailor's workshop—we can work and live together in the sweater's den for the profit of our employers; why should we not work and live together in our own workshops, or our own homes, for our own profit? The journeymen of the honourable trade are just as much interested as the slopworkers in putting down sweaters and slopsellers, since their numbers are constantly decreasing, so that their turn must come some day. Let them, if no one else does, lend money to allow us to set up a workshop of our own, a shop of our own. If the money be not lent, still let us stint and strain ourselves to the very bone, if it were only to raise one sweater's security-money, which one of us should pay into the slopseller's hands, in his own name, but on behalf of all: that will at least save one sweater's profit out of our labour, and bestow it upon ourselves; and we will not spend that profit, but hoard it, till we have squeezed out all the sweaters one by one. Then we will open our common shop, and sell at as low a price as the cheapest of the show shops. We *can* do this,—by the abolition of sweaters' profits,—by the using, as far as possible, of one set of fires, lights, rooms, kitchens, and washhouses,—above all, by being true and faithful to one another, as all partners should be. And, then, all that the master slopsellers had better do, will be simply to vanish and become extinct."

And again, let one man, or half-a-dozen men arise, who believe that the world is not the devil's world at all, but God's: that the multitude of the people is not, as Malthusians aver, the ruin, but as Solomon believed, "the strength of the rulers"; that men are not meant to be beasts of prey, eating one another up by competition, as

in some confined pike pond, where the great pike having despatched the little ones, begin to devour each other, till one overgrown monster is left alone to die of starvation. Let a few men who have money, and believe that, arise to play the man.

Let them help and foster the growth of association by all means. Let them advise the honourable tailors, while it is time, to save themselves from being degraded into slopsellers by admitting their journeymen to a share in profits. Let them encourage the journeymen to compete with Nebuchadnezzar & Co. at their own game. Let them tell those journeymen that the experiment is even now being tried, and, in many instances successfully, by no less than one hundred and four associations of journeymen in Paris. Let them remind them of that Great Name which the Parisian "ouvrier" so often forgets—of Him whose everlasting Fatherhood is the sole ground of all human brotherhood, whose wise and loving will is the sole source of all perfect order and government. Let them, as soon as an association is formed, provide for them a properly ventilated workshop, and let it out to the associate tailors at a low, fair rent. I believe that they will not lose by it—because it is right. God will take care of their money. The world, it comes out now, is so well ordered by Him, that model lodging-houses, public baths, wash-houses, insurance offices, all pay a reasonable profit to those who invest money in them—perhaps associate workshops may do the same. At all events, the owners of these show-shops realize a far higher profit than need be, while the buildings required for a tailoring establishment are surely not more costly than those absurd plate-glass fronts, and brass scroll-work chandeliers, and puffs, and paid poets. A large house might thus be taken, in some central situation, the upper floors of which might be fitted up as model lodging-rooms for the tailor's trade alone. The drawing-room floor might be the work-room; on the ground floor the shop; and, if possible, a room of call or registration office for unemployed journeymen, and a reading-room. Why should not this succeed, if the owners of the house and the workers who rent it are

only true to one another? Every tyro in political economy knows that association involves a saving both of labour and of capital. Why should it not succeed, when every one connected with the establishment, landlords and workmen, will have an interest in increasing its prosperity, and none whatever in lowering the wages of any party employed?

But above all, so soon as these men are found working together for common profit, in the spirit of mutual self-sacrifice, let every gentleman and every Christian, who has ever dealt with, or could ever have dealt with, Nebuchadnezzar and Co., or their fellows, make it a point of honour and conscience to deal with the associated workmen, and get others to do the like. *It is by securing custom, far more than by gifts or loans of money, that we can help the operatives.* We should but hang a useless burthen of debt round their necks by advancing capital, without affording them the means of disposing of their produce.

Be assured, that the finding of a tailors' model lodging house, work rooms, and shop, and the letting out of the two latter to an association, would be a righteous act to do. If the plan does not pay, what then? only a part of the money can be lost; and to have given that to an hospital or an almshouse would have been called praiseworthy and Christian charity; how much more to have spent it not in the cure, but in the prevention of evil—in making almshouses less needful, and lessening the number of candidates for the hospital!

Regulations as to police order, and temperance, the workmen must, and, if they are worthy of the name of free men, they can organize for themselves. Let them remember that an association of labour is very different from an association of capital. The capitalist only embarks his money on the venture; the workman embarks his time—that is, much at least of his life. Still more different is the operatives' association from the single capitalist, seeking only to realize a rapid fortune, and then withdraw. The association knows no withdrawal from business; it must grow in length and in

breadth, outlasting rival slopsellers, swallowing up all associations similar to itself, and which might end by competing with it. "Monopoly!" cries a free-trader, with hair on end. Not so, good friend; there will be no real free trade without association. Who tells you that tailors' associations are to be the only ones?

Some such thing, as I have hinted, might surely be done. Where there is a will there is a way. No doubt there are difficulties—Howard and Elizabeth Fry, too, had their difficulties. Brindley and Brunel did not succeed at the first trial. It is the sluggard only who is always crying, "There is a lion in the streets." Be daring—trust in God, and He will fight for you; man of money, whom these words have touched, godliness has the promise of this life, as well as of that to come. The thing must be done, and speedily; for if it be not done by fair means, it will surely do itself by foul. The continual struggle of competition, not only in the tailors' trade, but in every one which is not, like the navigator's or engineer's, at a premium from its novel and extraordinary demand, will weaken and undermine more and more the masters, who are already many of them speculating on borrowed capital, while it will depress the workmen to a point at which life will become utterly intolerable; increasing education will serve only to make them the more conscious of their own misery; the boiler will be strained to bursting pitch, till some jar, some slight crisis, suddenly directs the imprisoned forces to one point, and then—

What then?

Look at France, and see.

PARSON LOT.

PREFACE.

To the UNDERGRADUATES *of* CAMBRIDGE.

I HAVE addressed this preface to the young gentlemen of the University, first, because it is my duty to teach such of them as will hear me, Modern History; and I know no more important part of Modern History than the condition and the opinions of our own fellow-countrymen, some of which are set forth in this book.

Next, I have addressed them now, because I know that many of them, at various times, have taken umbrage at certain scenes of Cambridge life drawn in this book. I do not blame them for having done so. On the contrary, I have so far acknowledged the justice of their censure, that while I have altered hardly one other word in this book, I have re-written all that relates to Cambridge life.

Those sketches were drawn from my own recollections of 1838—1842. Whether they were overdrawn is a question between me and men of my own standing.

But the book was published in 1849; and I am assured by men in whom I have the most thorough confidence, that my sketches had by then at least become exagger-

ated and exceptional, and therefore, as a whole, untrue; that a process of purification was going on rapidly in the University; and that I must alter my words if I meant to give the working men a just picture of her.

Circumstances took the property and control of the book out of my hand, and I had no opportunity of reconsidering and of altering the passages. Those circumstances have ceased, and I take the first opportunity of altering all which my friends tell me should be altered.

But even if, as early as 1849, I had not been told that I must do so, I should have done so of my own accord, after the experiences of 1861. I have received at Cambridge a courtesy and kindness from my elders, a cordial welcome from my co-equals, and an earnest attention from the undergraduates with whom I have come in contact, which would bind me in honour to say nothing publicly against my University, even if I had aught to say. But I have nought. I see at Cambridge nothing which does not gain my respect for her present state and hope for her future. Increased sympathy between the old and young, increased intercourse between the teacher and the taught, increased freedom and charity of thought, and a steady purpose of internal self-reform and progress, seem to me already bearing good fruit, by making the young men regard their University with content and respect. And among the young men themselves, the sight of their increased earnestness and high-mindedness, increased sobriety and temperance, combined with a manliness not inferior to that of the stalwart lads of twenty years ago, has made me look upon my position among them as most noble, my work among them as most

hopeful, and made me sure that no energy which I can employ in teaching them will ever have been thrown away.

Much of this improvement seems to me due to the late High-Church movement; much to the influence of Dr. Arnold; much to that of Mr. Maurice; much to the general increase of civilization throughout the country: but whatever be the causes of it, the fact is patent; and I take delight in thus expressing my consciousness of it.

Another change I must notice in the tone of young gentlemen, not only at Cambridge, but throughout Britain, which is most wholesome and most hopeful. I mean their altered tone in speaking to and of the labouring classes. Thirty years ago, and even later, the young men of the labouring classes were "the cads," "the snobs," "the blackguards"; looked on with a dislike, contempt, and fear, which they were not backward to return, and which were but too ready to vent themselves on both sides in ugly words and deeds. That hateful severance between the classes was, I believe, an evil of recent growth, unknown to old England. From the middle ages, up to the latter years of the French war, the relation between the English gentry and the labourers seems to have been more cordial and wholesome than in any other country of Europe. But with the French Revolution came a change for the worse. The Revolution terrified too many of the upper, and excited too many of the lower classes; and the stern Tory system of repression, with its bad habit of talking and acting as if "the government" and "the people" were necessarily in antagonism, caused ever increasing bad blood. Besides, the old feudal ties between class and class, employer and

employed, had been severed. Large masses of working people had gathered in the manufacturing districts in savage independence. The agricultural labourers had been debased by the abuses of the old Poor-law into a condition upon which one looks back now with half-incredulous horror. Meanwhile, the distress of the labourers became more and more severe. Then arose Luddite mobs, meal mobs, farm riots, riots everywhere; Captain Swing and his rickburners, Peterloo "massacres," Bristol conflagrations, and all the ugly sights and rumours which made young lads, thirty or forty years ago, believe (and not so wrongly) that "the masses" were their natural enemies, and that they might have to fight, any year, or any day, for the safety of their property and the honour of their sisters.

How changed, thank God! is all this now. Before the influence of religion, both Evangelical and Anglican; before the spread of those liberal principles, founded on common humanity and justice, the triumph of which we owe to the courage and practical good sense of the Whig party; before the example of a Court, virtuous, humane, and beneficent; the attitude of the British upper classes has undergone a noble change. There is no aristocracy in the world, and there never has been one, as far as I know, which has so honourably repented, and brought forth fruits meet for repentance; which has so cheerfully asked what its duty was, that it might do it. It is not merely enlightened statesmen, philanthropists, devotees, or the working clergy, hard and heartily as they are working, who have set themselves to do good as a duty specially required of them by creed or by station. In the generality of younger laymen, as far as I can see, a

humanity (in the highest sense of the word) has been awakened, which bids fair, in another generation, to abolish the last remnants of class prejudices and class grudges. The whole creed of our young gentlemen is becoming more liberal, their demeanour more courteous, their language more temperate. They inquire after the welfare, or at least mingle in the sports of the labouring man, with a simple cordiality which was unknown thirty years ago; they are prompt, the more earnest of them, to make themselves of use to him on the ground of a common manhood, if any means of doing good are pointed out to them; and that it is in any wise degrading to "associate with low fellows," is an opinion utterly obsolete, save perhaps among a few sons of squireens in remote provinces, or of parvenus who cannot afford to recognize the class from whence they themselves have risen. In the army, thanks to the purifying effect of the Crimean and Indian wars, the same altered tone is patent. Officers feel for and with their men, talk to them, strive to instruct and amuse them more and more year by year; and—as a proof that the reform has not been forced on the officers by public opinion from without, but is spontaneous and from within, another instance of the altered mind of the aristocracy—the improvement is greatest in those regiments which are officered by men of the best blood; and in care for and sympathy with their men, her Majesty's Footguards stands first of all. God grant that the friendship which exists there between the leaders and the led may not be tested to the death amid the snow-drift or on the battle-field; but if it be so, I know too that it will stand the test.

But if I wish for one absolute proof of the changed re-

lation between the upper and the lower classes, I have only to point to the volunteer movement. In 1803, in the face of the most real and fatal danger, the Addington ministry was afraid of allowing volunteer regiments, and Lord Eldon, while pressing the necessity, could use as an argument that if the people did not volunteer for the Government, they would against it. So broad was even then the gulf between the governed and the governors. How much broader did it become in after years! Had invasion threatened us at any period between 1815 and 1830, or even later, would any ministry have dared to allow volunteer regiments? Would they have been justified in doing so, even if they had dared?

And now what has come to pass, all the world knows: but all the world should know likewise, that it never would have come to pass save for—not merely the late twenty years of good government in State, twenty years of virtue and liberality in the Court, but—the late twenty years of increasing right-mindedness in the gentry, who have now their reward in finding that the privates in the great majority of corps prefer being officered by men of a rank socially superior to their own. And as good always breeds fresh good, so this volunteer movement, made possible by the goodwill between classes, will help in its turn to increase that goodwill. Already, by the performance of a common duty, and the experience of a common humanity, these volunteer corps are become centres of cordiality between class and class; and gentleman, tradesman, and workman, the more they see of each other, learn to like, to trust, and to befriend each other more and more; a good work in which I hope the volunteers of the University of Cambridge will do their part like men and

gentlemen; when, leaving this University, they become each of them, as they ought, an organizing point for fresh volunteers in their own districts.

I know (that I may return to Cambridge) no better example of the way in which the altered tone of the upper classes and the volunteer movement have acted and reacted upon each other, than may be seen in the Cambridge Working Men's College, and its volunteer rifle corps, the 8th Cambridgeshire.

There we have—what perhaps could not have existed, what certainly did not exist twenty years ago—a school of a hundred men or more, taught for the last eight years gratuitously by men of the highest attainments in the University; by a dean—to whom, I believe, the success of the attempt is mainly owing; by professors, tutors, prizemen, men who are now head-masters of public schools, who have given freely to their fellow-men knowledge which has cost them large sums of money and the heavy labour of years. Without insulting them by patronage, without interfering with their religious opinions, without tampering with their independence in any wise, but simply on the ground of a common humanity, they have been helping to educate these men, belonging for the most part, I presume, to the very class which this book sets forth as most unhappy and most dangerous—the men conscious of unsatisfied and unemployed intellect. And they have their reward in a practical and patent form. Out of these men a volunteer corps is organized, officered partly by themselves, partly by gentlemen of the University; a nucleus of discipline, loyalty, and civilization for the whole population of Cambridge.

A noble work this has been, and one which may be the parent of works nobler still. It is the first instalment of, I will not say a debt, but a duty, which the Universities owe to the working classes. I have tried to express in this book, what I know were, twenty years ago, the feelings of clever working men, looking upon the superior educational advantages of our class. I cannot forget, any more than the working man, that the Universities were not founded exclusively, or even primarily, for our own class; that the great mass of students in the middle ages were drawn from the lower classes, and that sizarships, scholarships, exhibitions, and so forth, were founded for the sake of those classes, rather than of our own. How the case stands now, we all know. I do not blame the Universities for the change. It has come about, I think, simply by competition. The change began, I should say, in the sixteenth century. Then, after the Wars of the Roses, and the revival of letters, and the dissolution of the monasteries, the younger sons of gentlemen betook themselves to the pursuit of letters, fighting having become treasonable, and farming on a small scale difficult (perhaps owing to the introduction of large sheep-farms, which happened in those days), while no monastic orders were left to recruit the Universities, as they did continually through the middle ages, from that labouring class to which they and their scholars principally belonged

So the gentlemen's sons were free to compete against the sons of working men; and by virtue of their superior advantages they beat them out of the field. We may find through the latter half of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, bequest after bequest for the purpose of stopping this change, and of

enabling poor men's sons to enter the Universities; but the tendency was too strong to be effectually resisted then. Is it too strong to be resisted now? Does not the increased civilization and education of the working classes call on the Universities to consider whether they may not now try to become, what certainly they were meant to be, places of teaching and training for genius of every rank, and not merely for that of young gentlemen? Why should not wealthy Churchmen, in addition to the many good deeds in which they employ their wealth now-a-days, found fresh scholarships and exhibitions, confined to the sons of working men? If it be asked, how can they be so confined? What simpler method than that of connecting them with the National Society, and bestowing them exclusively on lads who have distinguished themselves in our National Schools? I believe that money spent in such a way, would be well spent both for the Nation, the Church, and the University. As for the introduction of such a class of lads lowering the tone of the University, I cannot believe it. There is room enough in Cambridge for men of every rank. There are still, in certain colleges, owing to circumstances which I should be very sorry to see altered, a fair sprinkling of young men who, at least before they have passed through a Cambridge career, would not be called well-bred. But they do not lower the tone of the University; the tone of the University raises them. Wherever there is intellectual power, good manners are easily acquired; the public opinion of young men expresses itself so freely, and possibly coarsely, that priggishness and forwardness (the faults to which a clever National School pupil would be most prone) are soon hammered out of any Cambridge man; and the result is, that some of the most distinguished

and most popular men in Cambridge, are men who have "risen from the ranks." All honour to them for having done so. But if they have succeeded so well, may there not be hundreds more in England who would succeed equally? and would it not be as just to the many, as useful to the University, in binding her to the people and the people to her, to invent some method for giving those hundreds a fair chance?

I earnestly press this suggestion (especially at the present time of agitation among Churchmen on the subject of education) upon the attention, not of the University itself, but of those wealthy men who wish well both to the University and to the people. Not, I say, of the University: it is not from her that the proposal must come, but from her friends outside. She is doing her best with the tools which she has; fresh work will require fresh tools, and I trust that such will be some day found for her.

I have now to tell those of them who may read this book, that it is not altogether out of date.

Those political passions, the last outburst of which it described, have, thank God, become mere matter of history by reason of the good government and the unexampled prosperity of the last twelve years: but fresh outbursts of them are always possible in a free country, whenever there is any considerable accumulation of neglects and wrongs; and meanwhile it is well—indeed it is necessary—for every student of history to know what manner of men they are who become revolutionaries, and what causes drive them to revolution; that they may judge

discerningly and charitably of their fellow-men, whenever they see them rising, however madly, against the powers that be.

As for the social evils described in this book, they have been much lessened in the last few years, especially by the movement for Sanatory Reform: but I must warn young men that they are not eradicated; that for instance, only last year, attention was called by this book to the working tailors in Edinburgh, and their state was found, I am assured, to be even more miserable than that of the London men in 1848. And I must warn them also that social evils, like dust and dirt, have a tendency to re-accumulate perpetually; so that however well this generation may have swept their house (and they have worked hard and honestly at it), the rising generation will have assuredly in twenty years' time to sweep it over again.

One thing more I have to say, and that very earnestly, to the young men of Cambridge. They will hear a "Conservative Reaction" talked of as imminent, indeed as having already begun. They will be told that this reaction is made more certain by the events now passing in North America; they will be bidden to look at the madnesses of an unbridled democracy, to draw from them some such lesson as the young Spartans were to draw from the drunken Helots, and to shun with horror any further attempts to enlarge the suffrage.

But if they have learnt (as they should from the training of this University) accuracy of thought and language, they will not be content with such vague general terms

as "Conservatism" and "Democracy": but will ask themselves—If this Conservative Reaction is at hand, what things is it likely to conserve; and still more, what ought it to conserve? If the violences and tyrannies of American Democracy are to be really warnings to us, then in what points does American Democracy coincide with British Democracy?—For so far and no farther can one be an example or warning for the other.

And looking, as they probably will under the pressure of present excitement, at the latter question first, they will surely see that no real analogy would exist between American and English Democracy, even were universal suffrage to be granted to-morrow.

For American Democracy, being merely arithmocratic, provides no representation whatsoever for the more educated and more experienced minority, and leaves the conduct of affairs to the uneducated and inexperienced many, with such results as we see. But those results are, I believe, simply impossible in a country which possesses hereditary Monarchy and a House of Lords, to give not only voice, but practical power to superior intelligence and experience. Mr. J. S. Mill, Mr. Stapleton, and Mr. Hare have urged of late the right of minorities to be represented as well as majorities, and have offered plans for giving them a fair hearing. That their demands are wise, as well as just, the present condition of the Federal States proves but too painfully. But we must not forget meanwhile, that the minorities of Britain are not altogether unrepresented. In a hereditary Monarch who has the power to call into his counsels, private and public, the highest intellect of the land; in a House of Lords not

wholly hereditary, but recruited perpetually from below by the most successful (and therefore, on the whole, the most capable) personages; in a free Press, conducted in all its most powerful organs by men of character and of liberal education, I see safeguards against any American tyranny of numbers, even if an enlargement of the suffrage did degrade the general tone of the House of Commons as much as some expect.

As long, I believe, as the Throne, the House of Lords, and the Press, are what, thank God, they are, so long will each enlargement of the suffrage be a fresh source not of danger, but of safety; for it will bind the masses to the established order of things by that loyalty which springs from content; from the sense of being appreciated, trusted, dealt with not as children, but as men.

There are those who will consider such language as this especially ill-timed just now, in the face of Strikes and Trades' Union outrages. They point to these things as proofs of the unfitness of workmen for the suffrage; they point especially to the late abominable murder at Sheffield, and ask, not without reason, would you give political power to men who would do that?

Now that the Sheffield murder was in any wise planned or commanded by the Trades' Unions in general, I do not believe; nor, I think, does any one else who knows aught of the British workman. If it was not, as some of the Sheffield men say, a private act of revenge, it was the act of only one or two Trades' Unions of that town, which are known; and their conduct has been already reprobated and denounced by the other Trades' Unions of England.

But there is no denying that the case as against the Trades' Unions is a heavy one. It is notorious that they have in past years planned and commanded illegal acts of violence. It is patent that they are too apt, from a false sense of class-honour, to connive at such now, instead of being, as they ought to be, the first to denounce them. The workmen will not see, that by combining in societies for certain purposes, they make those societies responsible for the good and lawful behaviour of all their members, in all acts tending to further those purposes, and are bound to say to every man joining a Trades' Union: "You shall do nothing to carry out the objects which we have in view, save what is allowed by British Law." They will not see that they are outraging the first principles of justice and freedom, by dictating to any man what wages he should receive, what master he shall work for, or any other condition which interferes with his rights as a free agent.

But, in the face of these facts (and very painful and disappointing they are to me), I will ask the upper classes: Do you believe that the average of Trades' Union members are capable of such villanies as that at Sheffield? Do you believe that the average of them are given to violence or illegal acts at all, even though they may connive at such acts in their foolish and hasty fellows, by a false class-honour, not quite unknown, I should say, in certain learned and gallant professions? Do you fancy that there are not in these Trades' Unions, tens of thousands of loyal, respectable, rational, patient men, as worthy of the suffrage as any average borough voter? If you do so, you really know nothing about the British workman. At least, you are confounding the workman of 1861 with

the workman of 1831, and fancying that he alone, of all classes, has gained nothing by the increased education, civilization, and political experience of thirty busy and prosperous years. You are unjust to the workman; and more, you are unjust to your own class. For thirty years past, gentlemen and ladies of all shades of opinion have been labouring for and among the working classes, as no aristocracy on earth ever laboured before; and do you suppose that all that labour has been in vain? That it has bred in the working classes no increased reverence for law, no increased content with existing institutions, no increased confidence in the classes socially above them? If so, you must have as poor an opinion of the capabilities of the upper classes, as you have of those of the lower.

So far from the misdoings of Trades' Unions being an argument against the extension of the suffrage, they are, in my opinion, an argument for it. I know that I am in a minority just now. I know that the common whisper is now, not especially of those who look for a Conservative reaction, that these Trades' Unions must be put down by strong measures: and I confess that I hear such language with terror. Punish, by all means, most severely, all individual offences against individual freedom, or personal safety; but do not interfere, surely, with the Trades' Unions themselves. Do not try to bar these men of their right as free Englishmen to combine, if they choose, for what they consider their own benefit. Look upon these struggles between employers and employed as fair battles, in which, by virtue of the irreversible laws of political economy, the party who is in the right is almost certain to win; and interfere in no wise, save to see fair

play, and lawful means used on both sides alike. If you do more; if you interfere in any wise with the Trades' Unions themselves, you will fail, and fail doubly. You will not prevent the existence of combinations: you will only make them secret, dark, revolutionary: you will demoralize the working man thereby as surely as the merchant is demoralized by being converted into a smuggler; you will heap up indignation, spite, and wrath against the day of wrath; and finally, to complete your own failure, you will drive the working man to demand an extension of the suffrage, in tones which will very certainly get a hearing. He cares, or seems to care, little about the suffrage now, just because he thinks that he can best serve his own interests by working these Trades' Unions. Take from him that means of redress (real or mistaken, no matter); and he will seek redress in a way in which you wish him still less to seek it; by demanding a vote and obtaining one.

That consummation, undesirable as it may seem to many, would perhaps be the best for the peace of the trades. These Trades' Unions, still tainted with some of the violence, secrecy, false political economy which they inherit from the evil times of 1830—40, last on simply, I believe, because the workman feels that they are his only organ, that he has no other means of making his wants and his opinions known to the British Government. Had he a vote, he believes (and I believe with him) he could send at least a few men to Parliament who would state his case fairly in the House of Commons, and would not only render a reason for him, but hear reason against him, if need were. He would be content with free discussion if he could get that. It is the feeling that he cannot get

it that drives him often into crooked and dark ways. If any answer, that the representatives whom he would choose would be merely noisy demagogues, I believe them to be mistaken. No one can have watched the Preston strike, however much he may have disapproved, as I did, of the strike itself, without seeing from the temper, the self-restraint, the reasonableness, the chivalrous honour of the men, that they were as likely to choose a worthy member for the House of Commons as any town constituency in England; no one can have watched the leaders of the working men for the last ten years without finding among them men capable of commanding the attention and respect of the House of Commons, not merely by their eloquence, surprising as that is, but by their good sense, good feeling, and good breeding.

Some training at first, some rubbing off of angles, they might require: though two at least I know, who would require no such training, and who would be ornaments to any House of Commons; the most inexperienced of the rest would not give the House one-tenth the trouble which is given by a certain clique among the representatives of the sister Isle; and would, moreover, learn his lesson in a week, instead of never learning it at all, like some we know too well. Yet Catholic emancipation has pacified Ireland, though it has brought into the House an inferior stamp of members: and much more surely would an extension of the suffrage pacify the trades, while it would bring into the House a far superior stamp of member to those who compose the clique of which I have spoken.

But why, I hear some one say impatiently, talk about

this subject of all others at this moment, when nobody, not even the working classes, cares about a Reform Bill?

Because I am speaking to young men, who have not yet entered public life; and because I wish them to understand, that just because the question of parliamentary reform is in abeyance now, it will not be in abeyance ten years or twenty years hence. The question will be revived, ere they are in the maturity of their manhood; and they had best face that certain prospect, and learn to judge wisely and accurately on the subject, before they are called on, as they will be, to act upon it. If it be true that the present generation has done all that it can do, or intends to do, towards the suffrage (and I have that confidence in our present rulers, that I would submit without murmuring to their decision on the point), it is all the more incumbent on the rising generation to learn how to do (as assuredly they will have to do) the work which their fathers have left undone. The question may remain long in abeyance, under the influence of material prosperity such as the present; or under the excitement of a war, as in Pitt's time; but let a period of distress or disaster come, and it will be re-opened as of yore. The progress towards institutions more and more popular may be slow, but it is sure. Whenever any class has conceived the hope of being fairly represented, it is certain to fulfil its own hopes, unless it employs, or provokes, violence impossible in England. The thing will be. Let the young men of Britain take care that it is done rightly when it is done.

And how ought it to be done? That will depend upon any circumstances now future and uncertain. It

will depend upon the pace at which sound education spreads among the working classes. It will depend, too, very much—I fear only too much—upon the attitude of the upper classes to the lower, in this very question of Trades' Unions and of Strikes. It will depend upon their attitude toward the unrepresented classes during the next few years, upon this very question of extended suffrage. And, therefore, I should advise, I had almost said entreat, any young men over whom I have any influence, to read and think freely and accurately upon the subject; taking, if I may propose to them a text-book, Mr. Mill's admirable treatise on "Representative Government." As for any theory of my own, if I had one I should not put it forward. How it will not be done, I can see clearly enough. It will not be done well by the old charter. It will not be done well by merely lowering the money qualification of electors. But it may be done well by other methods beside; and I can trust the freedom and soundness of the English mind to discover the best method of all, when it is needed.

Let therefore this "Conservative Reaction" which I suspect is going on in the minds of many young men at Cambridge, consider what it has to conserve. It is not asked to conserve the Throne. That, thank God, can take good care of itself. Let it conserve the House of Lords; and that will be conserved, just in proportion as the upper classes shall copy the virtues of Royalty; both of him who is taken from us, and of her who is left. Let the upper classes learn from them, that the just and wise method of strengthening their political power, is to labour after that social power, which comes only by virtue and usefulness. Let them make themselves, as the present Sovereign has made herself, morally necessary to the

people; and then there is no fear of their being found politically unnecessary. No other course is before them, if they wish to make their "Conservative Reaction" a permanent, even an endurable fact. If any young gentlemen fancy (and some do) that they can strengthen their class by making any secret alliance with the Throne against the masses, then they will discover rapidly that the sovereigns of the House of Brunswick are grown far too wise, and far too noble-hearted, to fall once more into that trap. If any of them (and some do) fancy that they can better their position by sneering, whether in public or in their club, at a Reformed House of Commons and a Free Press, they will only accelerate the results which they most dread, by forcing the ultra-liberal party of the House, and, what is even worse, the most intellectual and respectable portion of the Press, to appeal to the people against them; and if again they are tempted (as too many of them are) to give up public life as becoming too vulgar for them, and prefer ease and pleasure to the hard work and plain-speaking of the House of Commons; then they will simply pay the same penalty for laziness and fastidiousness which has been paid by the Spanish aristocracy; and will discover that if they think their intellect unnecessary to the nation, the nation will rapidly become of the same opinion, and go its own way without them.

But if they are willing to make themselves, as they easily can, the best educated, the most trustworthy, the most virtuous, the most truly liberal-minded class of the commonweal; if they will set themselves to study the duties of rank and property, as of a profession to which they are called by God, and the requirements of which they must fulfil; if they will acquire, as they can easily,

a sound knowledge both of political economy, and of the social questions of the day; if they will be foremost with their personal influence in all good works; if they will set themselves to compete on equal terms with the classes below them, and, as they may, outrival them: then they will find that those classes will receive them not altogether on equal terms; that they will accede to them a superiority, undefined perhaps, but real and practical enough to conserve their class and their rank, in every article for which a just and prudent man would wish.

But if any young gentlemen look forward (as I fear a few do still) to a Conservative Reaction of any other kind than this; to even the least return to the Tory maxims and methods of George the Fourth's time; to even the least stoppage of what the world calls progress—which I should define as the putting in practice the results of inductive science; then do they, like king Picrochole in Rabelais, look for a kingdom which shall be restored to them at the coming of the Cocqcigrues. The Cocqcigrues are never coming; and none know that better than the present able and moderate leaders of the Conservative party; none will be more anxious to teach that fact to their young adherents, and to make them swim with the great stream, lest it toss them contemptuously ashore upon its banks, and go on its way unheeding.

Return to the system of 1800—1830, is, I thank God, impossible. Even though men's hearts should fail them, they must onward, they know not whither: though God does know. The bigot, who believes in a system, and not in the living God; the sentimentalist, who shrinks from facts because they are painful to his taste; the sluggard, who hates a change because it disturbs his ease; the

simply stupid person, who cannot use his eyes and ears; all these may cry feebly to the world to do what it has never done since its creation—stand still awhile, that they may get their breaths. But the brave and honest gentleman—who believes that God is not the tempter and deceiver, but the father and the educator of man—he will not shrink, even though the pace may be at moments rapid, the path be at moments hid by mist; for he will believe that freedom and knowledge, as well as virtue, are the daughters of the Most High; and he will follow them and call on the rest to follow them, whithersoever they may lead; and will take heart for himself and for his class, by the example of that great Prince who is of late gone home. For if, like that most royal soul, he and his shall follow with single eye and steadfast heart, freedom, knowledge, and virtue; then will he and his be safe, as Royalty is safe in England now; because both God and man have need thereof.

PREFACE.

Written in 1854.

ADDRESSED TO THE WORKING MEN OF GREAT BRITAIN.

My Friends,—Since I wrote this book five years ago, I have seen a good deal of your class, and of their prospects. Much that I have seen has given me great hope; much has disappointed me; nothing has caused me to alter the opinions here laid down.

Much has given me hope; especially in the North of England. I believe that there, at least, exists a mass of prudence, self-control, genial and sturdy manhood, which will be England's reserve-force for generations yet to come. The last five years, moreover, have certainly been years of progress for the good cause. The great drag upon it—namely, demagogism—has crumbled to pieces of its own accord; and seems now only to exhibit itself in anilities like those of the speakers who inform a mob of boys and thieves that wheat has lately been thrown into the Thames to keep up prices, or advise them to establish, by means hitherto undiscovered, national granaries, only possible under the despotism of a Pharaoh. Since the 10th of April, 1848 (one of the most lucky days which the English workman ever saw), the trade of the mob-

orator has dwindled down to such last shifts as these, to which the working man sensibly seems merely to answer, as he goes quietly about his business, "Why will you still keep talking, Signor Benedick? Nobody marks you."

But the 10th of April, 1848, has been a beneficial crisis, not merely in the temper of the working men, so called, but in the minds of those who are denominated by them "the aristocracy." There is no doubt that the classes possessing property have been facing, since 1848, all social questions with an average of honesty, earnestness, and good feeling which has no parallel since the days of the Tudors, and that hundreds and thousands of "gentlemen and ladies" in Great Britain now are saying, "Show what we ought to do to be just to the workman, and we will do it, whatsoever it costs." They may not be always correct (though they generally are so) in their conceptions of what ought to be done; but their purpose is good and righteous; and those who hold it are daily increasing in number. The love of justice and mercy toward the handicraftsman is spreading rapidly as it never did before in any nation upon earth; and if any man still represents the holders of property, as a class, as the enemies of those whom they employ, desiring their slavery and their ignorance, I believe that he is a liar and a child of the devil, and that he is at his father's old work, slandering and dividing between man and man. These words may be severe: but they are deliberate; and working men are, I hope, sufficiently accustomed to hear me call a spade a spade, when I am pleading for them, to allow me to do the same when I am pleading to them.

Of the disappointing experiences which I have had I shall say nothing, save in as far as I can, by alluding to them, point out to the working man the causes which

still keep him weak: but I am bound to say that those disappointments have strengthened my conviction that this book, in the main, speaks the truth.

I do not allude, of course, to the thoughts and feelings of the hero. They are compounded of right and wrong, and such as I judged (and working men whom I am proud to number among my friends have assured me that I judged rightly) that a working man of genius would feel during the course of his self-education. These thoughts and feelings (often inconsistent and contradictory to each other), stupid or careless, or ill-willed persons, have represented as my own opinions, having, as it seems to me, turned the book upside down before they began to read it. I am bound to pay the working men, and their organs in the press, the compliment of saying that no such misrepresentations proceeded from them. However deeply some of them may have disagreed with me, all of them, as far as I have been able to judge, had sense to see what I meant; and so, also, have the organs of the High-Church party, to whom, differing from them on many points, I am equally bound to offer my thanks for their fairness. But, indeed, the way in which this book, in spite of its crudities, has been received by persons of all ranks and opinions, who instead of making me an offender for a word, have taken the book heartily and honestly, in the spirit and not in the letter, has made me most hopeful for the British mind, and given me a strong belief that, in spite of all foppery, luxury, covetousness, and unbelief, the English heart is still strong and genial, able and willing to do and suffer great things, as soon as the rational way of doing and suffering them becomes plain. Had I written this book merely to please my own fancy, this would be a paltry

criterion, at once illogical and boastful; but I wrote it, God knows, in the fear of God, that I might speak what seems to me the truth of God. I trusted in Him to justify me, in spite of my own youth, inexperience, hastiness, clumsiness; and He has done it; and, I trust, will do it to the end.

And now, what shall I say to you, my friends, about the future? Your destiny is still in your own hands. For the last seven years you have let it slip through your fingers. If you are better off than you were in 1848, you owe it principally to those laws of political economy (as they are called), which I call the brute natural accidents of supply and demand, or to the exertions which have been made by upright men of the very classes whom demagogues taught you to consider as your natural enemies. Pardon me if I seem severe; but, as old Aristotle has it, "Both parties being my friends, it is a sacred duty to honour truth first." And is this not the truth? How little have the working men done to carry out that idea of association in which, in 1848-9, they were all willing to confess their salvation lay. Had the money which was wasted in the hapless Preston strike been wisely spent in relieving the labour market by emigration, or in making wages more valuable by enabling the workman to buy from co-operative stores and mills his necessaries at little above cost price, how much sorrow and heart-burning might have been saved to the iron-trades. Had the real English endurance and courage which was wasted in that strike been employed in the cause of association, the men might have been, ere now, far happier than they are ever likely to be, without the least injury to the masters. What, again, has been done toward developing the organization of the Trades' Unions into its true form, Asso-

ciation for distribution, from its old, useless, and savage form of Association for the purpose of resistance to masters—a war which is at first sight hopeless, even were it just, because the opposite party holds in his hand the supplies of his foe as well as his own, and therefore can starve him out at his leisure? What has been done, again, toward remedying the evils of the slop system, which this book especially exposed? The true method for the working men, if they wished to save their brothers and their brothers' wives and daughters from degradation, was to withdraw their custom from the slopsellers, and to deal, even at a temporary increase of price, with associate workmen. Have they done so? They can answer for themselves. In London (as in the country towns), the paltry temptation of buying in the cheapest market has still been too strong for the labouring man. In Scotland and in the North of England, thank God, the case has been very different; and to the North I must look still, as I did when I wrote Alton Locke, for the strong men in whose hands lies the destiny of the English handicraftsman.

God grant that the workmen of the South of England may bestir themselves ere it be too late, and discover that the only defence against want is self-restraint; the only defence against slavery, obedience to rule; and that, instead of giving themselves up, bound hand and foot, by their own fancy for a "freedom" which is but selfish and conceited license, to the brute accidents of the competitive system, they may begin to organize among themselves associations for buying and selling the necessaries of life, which may enable them to weather the dark season of high prices and stagnation, which is certain sooner or later, to follow in the footsteps of war.

On politics I have little to say. My belief remains unchanged that true Christianity, and true monarchy also, are not only compatible with, but require as their necessary complement, true freedom for every man of every class; and that the Charter, now defunct, was just as wise and as righteous a "Reform Bill" as any which England had yet had, or was likely to have. But I frankly say that my experience of the last five years gives me little hope of any great development of the true democratic principle in Britain, because it gives me little sign that the many are fit for it. Remember always that Democracy means a government not merely by numbers of isolated individuals, but by a Demos—by men accustomed to live in Demoi, or corporate bodies, and accustomed, therefore, to the self-control, obedience to law, and self-sacrificing public spirit, without which a corporate body cannot exist: but that a "democracy" of mere numbers is no democracy, but a mere brute "arithmocracy," which is certain to degenerate into an "ochlocracy," or government by the mob, in which the numbers have no real share: an oligarchy of the fiercest, the noisiest, the rashest, and the most shameless, which is surely swallowed up either by a despotism, as in France, or as in Athens, by utter national ruin, and helpless slavery to a foreign invader. Let the workmen of Britain train themselves in the corporate spirit, and in the obedience and self-control which it brings, as they easily can in associations, and bear in mind always that *only he who can obey is fit to rule;* and then, when they are fit for it, the Charter may come, or things, I trust, far better than the Charter; and till they have done so, let them thank the just and merciful Heavens for keeping out of their hands any power, and for keeping off their shoulders any responsibility, which

they would not be able to use aright. I thank God heartily, this day, that I have no share in the government of Great Britain; and I advise my working friends to do the same, and to believe that, when they are fit to take their share therein, all the powers of earth cannot keep them from taking it; and that, till then, happy is the man who does the duty which lies nearest him, who educates his family, raises his class, performs his daily work as to God and to his country, not merely to his employer and himself; for it is only he that is faithful over a few things who will be made, or will be happy in being made, ruler over many things.

Yours ever,

C. K.

ALTON LOCKE,

TAILOR AND POET.

CHAPTER I.

A POET'S CHILDHOOD.

I AM a Cockney among Cockneys. Italy and the Tropics, the Highlands and Devonshire, I know only in dreams. Even the Surrey Hills, of whose loveliness I have heard so much, are to me a distant fairy-land, whose gleaming ridges I am worthy only to behold afar. With the exception of two journeys, never to be forgotten, my knowledge of England is bounded by the horizon which encircles Richmond Hill.

My earliest recollections are of a suburban street; of its jumble of little shops and little terraces, each exhibiting some fresh variety of capricious ugliness; the little scraps of garden before the doors, with their dusty, stunted lilacs and balsam poplars, were my only forests; my only wild animals, the dingy, merry sparrows, who quarrelled fearlessly on my window-sill, ignorant of trap or gun. From my earliest childhood, through long nights of sleepless pain, as the midnight brightened into dawn, and the glaring lamps grew pale, I used to listen, with pleasant awe, to the ceaseless roll of the market-waggons, bringing up to the great city the treasures of the gay green country, the land of fruits and flowers, for which I have yearned all my life in vain. They

seemed to my boyish fancy mysterious messengers from another world: the silent, lonely night, in which they were the only moving things, added to the wonder. I used to get out of bed to gaze at them, and envy the coarse men and sluttish women who attended them, their labour among verdant plants and rich brown mould, on breezy slopes, under God's own clear sky. I fancied that they learnt what I knew I should have learnt there; I knew not then that "the eye only sees that which it brings with it the power of seeing." When will their eyes be opened? When will priests go forth into the highways and the hedges, and preach to the ploughman and the gipsy the blessed news, that there too, in every thicket and fallow-field, is the house of God, —there, too, the gate of Heaven?

I do not complain that I am a Cockney. That, too, is God's gift. He made me one, that I might learn to feel for poor wretches who sit stifled in reeking garrets and workrooms, drinking in disease with every breath,—bound in their prison-house of brick and iron, with their own funeral pall hanging over them, in that canopy of fog and poisonous smoke, from their cradle to their grave. I have drunk of the cup of which they drink. And so I have learnt—if, indeed, I have learnt—to be a poet—a poet of the people. That honour, surely, was worth buying with asthma, and rickets, and consumption, and weakness, and—worst of all to me—with ugliness. It was God's purpose about me; and, therefore, all circumstances combined to imprison me in London. I used once, when I worshipped circumstance, to fancy it my curse, Fate's injustice to me, which kept me from developing my genius, asserting my rank among poets. I longed to escape to glorious Italy, or some other southern climate, where natural beauty would have become the very element which I breathed; and yet, what would have come of that? Should I not, as nobler spirits than I have done, have idled away my life in Elysian dreams, singing out like a bird into the air, inarticulately, purposeless, for mere joy and fulness of heart; and taking no share in the terrible questionings, the terrible strugglings

of this great, awful, blessed time—feeling no more the pulse of the great heart of England stirring me? I used, as I said, to call it the curse of circumstance that I was a sickly, decrepit Cockney. My mother used to tell me that it was the cross which God had given me to bear. I know now that she was right there. She used to say that my disease was God's will. I do not think, though, that she spoke right there also. I think that it was the will of the world and of the devil, of man's avarice and laziness and ignorance. And so would my readers, perhaps, had they seen the shop in the city where I was born and nursed, with its little garrets reeking with human breath, its kitchens and areas with noisome sewers. A sanitary reformer would not be long in guessing the cause of my unhealthiness. He would not rebuke me—nor would she, sweet soul! now that she is at rest and bliss—for my wild longings to escape, for my envying the very flies and sparrows their wings that I might flee miles away into the country, and breathe the air of heaven once, and die. I have had my wish. I have made two journeys far away into the country, and they have been enough for me.

My mother was a widow. My father, whom I cannot recollect, was a small retail tradesman in the city. He was unfortunate; and when he died, my mother came down, and lived penuriously enough, I know not how till I grew older, down in that same suburban street. She had been brought up an Independent. After my father's death she became a Baptist, from conscientious scruples. She considered the Baptists, as I do, as the only sect who thoroughly embody the Calvinistic doctrines. She held it, as I do, an absurd and impious thing for those who believe mankind to be children of the devil till they have been consciously "converted," to baptise unconscious infants and give them the sign of God's mercy on the mere chance of that mercy being intended for them. When God had proved by converting them, that they were not reprobate and doomed to hell by His absolute and eternal will, then, and not till then, dare man baptise them into His name. She dared not

palm a presumptuous fiction on herself, and call it "charity." So, though we had both been christened during my father's lifetime, she purposed to have us rebaptised, if ever that happened—which, in her sense of the word, never happened, I am afraid, to me.

She gloried in her dissent; for she was sprung from old Puritan blood, which had flowed again and again beneath the knife of Star-Chamber butchers, and on the battle-fields of Naseby and Sedgemoor. And on winter evenings she used to sit with her Bible on her knee, while I and my little sister Susan stood beside her and listened to the stories of Gideon and Barak, and Samson and Jephthah, till her eye kindled up, and her thoughts passed forth from that old Hebrew time home into those English times which she fancied, and not untruly, like them. And we used to shudder, and yet listen with a strange fascination, as she told us how her ancestor called his seven sons off their small Cambridge farm, and horsed and armed them himself to follow behind Cromwell, and smite kings and prelates with "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Whether she were right or wrong, what is it to me? What is it now to her, thank God? But those stories, and the strict, stern Puritan education, learnt from the Independents and not the Baptists, which accompanied them, had their effect on me, for good and ill.

My mother moved by rule and method; by God's law, as she considered, and that only. She seldom smiled. Her word was absolute. She never commanded twice, without punishing. And yet there were abysses of unspoken tenderness in her, as well as clear, sound, womanly sense and insight. But she thought herself as much bound to keep down all tenderness as if she had been some ascetic of the middle ages—so do extremes meet! It was "carnal," she considered. She had as yet no right to have any "spiritual affection" for us. We were still "children of wrath and of the devil,"—not yet "convinced of sin," "converted, born again." She had no more spiritual bond with us, she thought, than she had with a heathen or a Papist. She dared not even pray

for our conversion, earnestly as she prayed on every other subject. For though the majority of her sect would have done so, her clear logical sense would yield to no such tender inconsistency. Had it not been decided from all eternity? We were elect, or we were reprobate. Could her prayers alter that? If He had chosen us, He would call us in His own good time: and, if not, ——. Only again and again, as I afterwards discovered from a journal of hers, she used to beseech God with agonized tears to set her mind at rest by revealing to her His will towards us. For that comfort she could at least rationally pray. But she received no answer. Poor, beloved mother! If thou couldst not read the answer, written in every flower and every sunbeam, written in the very fact of our existence here at all, what answer would have sufficed thee.

And yet, with all this, she kept the strictest watch over our morality. Fear, of course, was the only motive she employed; for how could our still carnal understandings be affected with love to God? And love to herself was too paltry and temporary to be urged by one who knew that her life was uncertain, and who was always trying to go down to the deepest eternal ground and reason of everything, and take her stand upon that. So our god, or gods rather, till we were twelve years old, were hell, the rod, the ten commandments, and public opinion. Yet under them, not they, but something deeper far, both in her and us, preserved us pure. Call it natural character, conformation of the spirit,—conformation of the brain, if you like, if you are a scientific man and a phrenologist. I never yet could dissect and map out my own being, or my neighbour's, as you analysts do. To me, I myself, ay, and each person round me, seem one inexplicable whole; to take away a single faculty whereof, is to destroy the harmony, the meaning, the life of all the rest. That there is a duality in us —a lifelong battle between flesh and spirit—we all, alas! know well enough; but which is flesh and which is spirit, what philosophers in these days can tell us? Still less had we two found out any such duality or discord in our-

selves; for we were gentle and obedient children. The pleasures of the world did not tempt us. We did not know of their existence; and no foundlings educated in a nunnery ever grew up in a more virginal and spotless innocence—if ignorance be such—than did Susan and I.

The narrowness of my sphere of observation only concentrated the faculty into greater strength. The few natural objects which I met—and they, of course, constituted my whole outer world (for art and poetry were tabooed both by my rank and my mother's sectarianism, and the study of human beings only develops itself as the boy grows into the man)—these few natural objects, I say, I studied with intense keenness. I knew every leaf and flower in the little front garden; every cabbage and rhubarb plant in Battersea fields was wonderful and beautiful to me. Clouds and water I learned to delight in, from my occasional lingerings on Battersea bridge, and yearning westward looks toward the sun setting above rich meadows and wooded gardens, to me a forbidden El Dorado.

I brought home wild-flowers and chance beetles and butterflies, and pored over them, not in the spirit of a naturalist, but of a poet. They were to me God's angels shining in coats of mail and fairy masquerading dresses. I envied them their beauty, their freedom. At last I made up my mind, in the simple tenderness of a child's conscience, that it was wrong to rob them of the liberty for which I pined,—to take them away from the beautiful broad country whither I longed to follow them; and I used to keep them a day or two, and then, regretfully, carry them back, and set them loose on the first opportunity, with many compunctions of heart, when, as generally happened, they had been starved to death in the mean time.

They were my only recreations after the hours of the small day-school at the neighbouring chapel, where I learnt to read, write, and sum; except, now and then, a London walk, with my mother holding my hand tight the whole way. She would have hoodwinked me, stopped my ears with cotton, and led me in a string,—kind, careful

soul!—if it had been reasonably safe on a crowded pavement, so fearful was she lest I should be polluted by some chance sight or sound of the Babylon which she feared and hated—almost as much as she did the Bishops.

The only books which I knew were the Pilgrim's Progress and the Bible. The former was my Shakespeare, my Dante, my Vedas, by which I explained every fact and phenomenon of life. London was the City of Destruction, from which I was to flee; I was Christian; the Wicket of the Way of Life I had strangely identified with the turnpike at Battersea-bridge end; and the rising ground of Mortlake and Wimbledon was the Land of Beulah—the Enchanted Mountains of the Shepherds. If I could once get there I was saved: a carnal view, perhaps, and a childish one; but there was a dim meaning and human reality in it nevertheless.

As for the Bible, I knew nothing of it really, beyond the Old Testament. Indeed, the life of Christ had little chance of becoming interesting to me. My mother had given me formally to understand that it spoke of matters too deep for me; that "till converted, the natural man could not understand the things of God": and I obtained little more explanation of it from the two unintelligible, dreary sermons to which I listened every dreary Sunday, in terror lest a chance shuffle of my feet, or a hint of drowsiness,—natural result of the stifling gallery and glaring windows and gas lights,—should bring down a lecture and a punishment when I returned home. Oh, those "sabbaths!"—days, not of rest, but utter weariness, when the beetles and the flowers were put by, and there was nothing to fill up the long vacuity but books of which I could not understand a word: when play, laughter, or even a stare out of window at the sinful, merry, sabbath-breaking promenaders, were all forbidden, as if the commandment had run, "In it thou shalt take no manner of amusement, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter." By what strange ascetic perversion has *that* got to mean "keeping holy the sabbath-day"?

Yet there was an hour's relief in the evening, when

either my mother told us Old Testament stories, or some preacher or two came in to supper after meeting; and I used to sit in the corner and listen to their talk; not that I understood a word, but the mere struggle to understand —the mere watching my mother's earnest face—my pride in the reverent flattery with which the worthy men addressed her as "a mother in Israel," were enough to fill up the blank for me till bed-time.

Of "vital Christianity" I heard much; but, with all my efforts, could find out nothing. Indeed, it did not seem interesting enough to tempt me to find out much. It seemed a set of doctrines, believing in which was to have a magical effect on people, by saving them from the everlasting torture due to sins and temptations which I had never felt. Now and then, believing, in obedience to my mother's assurances, and the solemn prayers of the ministers about me, that I was a child of hell, and a lost and miserable sinner, I used to have accesses of terror, and fancy that I should surely wake next morning in everlasting flames. Once I put my finger a moment into the fire, as certain Papists, and Protestants too, have done, not only to themselves, but to their disciples, to see if it would be so very dreadfully painful; with what conclusions the reader may judge. . . . Still, I could not keep up the excitement. Why should I? The fear of pain is not the fear of sin, that I know of; and, indeed, the thing was unreal altogether in my case, and my heart, my common sense, rebelled against it again and again; till at last I got a terrible whipping for taking my little sister's part, and saying that if she was to die,—so gentle, and obedient, and affectionate as she was,—God would be very unjust in sending her to hell-fire, and that I was quite certain He would do no such thing—unless He were the Devil: an opinion which I have since seen no reason to change. The confusion between the King of Hell and the King of Heaven has cleared up, thank God, since then!

So I was whipped and put to bed—the whipping altering my secret heart just about as much as the dread of hell-fire did.

I speak as a Christian man—an orthodox Churchman (if you require that shibboleth). Was I so very wrong? What was there in the idea of religion which was represented to me at home to captivate me? What was the use of a child's hearing of "God's great love manifested in the scheme of redemption," when he heard, in the same breath, that the effects of that redemption were practically confined only to one human being out of a thousand, and that the other nine hundred and ninety-nine were lost and damned from their birth-hour to all eternity —not only by the absolute will and reprobation of God (though that infernal blasphemy I heard often enough), but also, putting that out of the question, by the mere fact of being born of Adam's race? And this to a generation to whom God's love shines out in every tree and flower and hedge-side bird; to whom the daily discoveries of science are revealing that love in every microscopic animalcule which peoples the stagnant pool! This to working men, whose craving is only for some idea which shall give equal hopes, claims, and deliverances, to all mankind alike! This to working men, who, in the smiles of their innocent children, see the heaven which they have lost—the messages of baby-cherubs, made in God's own image! This to me, to whom every butterfly, every look at my little sister, contradicted the lie! You may say that such thoughts were too deep for a child; that I am ascribing to my boyhood the scepticism of my manhood; but it is not so; and what went on in my mind goes on in the minds of thousands. It is the cause of the contempt into which not merely sectarian Protestantism, but Christianity altogether, has fallen in the minds of the thinking workmen. Clergymen, who anathematize us for wandering into Unitarianism—you, you have driven us thither. You must find some explanation of the facts of Christianity more in accordance with the truths which we do know, and will live and die for, or you can never hope to make us Christians; or, if we do return to the true fold, it will be as I returned, after long, miserable years of darkling error, to a higher truth than most of you have yet learned to preach.

But those old Jewish heroes did fill my whole heart and soul. I learnt from them lessons which I never wish to unlearn. Whatever else I saw about them, this I saw,—that they were patriots, deliverers from that tyranny and injustice from which the child's heart,—"child of the devil" though you may call him,—instinctively, and, as I believe, by a divine inspiration, revolts. Moses leading his people out of Egypt; Gideon, Barak, and Samson, slaying their oppressors; David, hiding in the mountains from the tyrant, with his little band of those who had fled from the oppressions of an aristocracy of Nabals; Jehu, executing God's vengeance on the kings—they were my heroes, my models; they mixed themselves up with the dim legends about the Reformation martyrs, Cromwell and Hampden, Sidney and Monmouth, which I had heard at my mother's knee. Not that the perennial oppression of the masses, in all ages and countries, had yet risen on me as an awful, torturing, fixed idea. I fancied, poor fool! that tyranny was the exception, and not the rule. But it was the mere sense of abstract pity and justice which was delighted in me. I thought that these were old fairy tales, such as never need be realized again. I learnt otherwise in after years.

I have often wondered since, why all cannot read the same lesson as I did in those old Hebrew Scriptures—that they, of all books in the world, have been wrested into proofs of the divine right of kings, the eternal necessity of slavery! But the eye only sees what it brings with it the power of seeing. The upper classes, from their first day at school, to their last day at college, read of nothing but the glories of Salamis and Marathon, of freedom and of the old republics. And what comes of it? No more than their tutors know will come of it, when they thrust into the boys' hands books which give the lie in every page to their own political superstitions.

But when I was just turned of thirteen, an altogether new fairy-land was opened to me by some missionary tracts and journals, which were lent to my mother by the ministers. Pacific coral islands and volcanoes, cocoa-nut groves

and bananas, graceful savages with paint and feathers—what an El Dorado! How I devoured them and dreamt of them, and went there in fancy, and preached small sermons as I lay in my bed at night to Tahitians and New Zealanders, though I confess my spiritual eyes were, just as my physical eyes would have been, far more busy with the scenery than with the souls of my audience. However, that was the place for me, I saw clearly. And one day, I recollect it well, in the little dingy, foul, reeking, twelve foot square back-yard, where huge smoky party-walls shut out every breath of air and almost all the light of heaven, I had climbed up between the water-butt and the angle of the wall for the purpose of fishing out of the dirty fluid which lay there, crusted with soot and alive with insects, to be renewed only three times in the seven days, some of the great larvæ and kicking monsters which made up a large item in my list of wonders: all of a sudden the horror of the place came over me; those grim prison-walls above, with their canopy of lurid smoke; the dreary, sloppy, broken pavement; the horrible stench of the stagnant cesspools; the utter want of form, colour, life, in the whole place, crushed me down, without my being able to analyse my feelings as I can now; and then came over me that dream of Pacific Islands, and the free, open sea; and I slid down from my perch, and bursting into tears threw myself upon my knees in the court, and prayed aloud to God to let me be a missionary.

Half fearfully I let out my wishes to my mother when she came home. She gave me no answer; but, as I found out afterwards,—too late, alas! for her, if not for me,—she, like Mary, had "laid up all these things, and treasured them in her heart."

You may guess, then, my delight when, a few days afterwards, I heard that a real live missionary was coming to take tea with us. A man who had actually been in New Zealand!—the thought was rapture. I painted him to myself over and over again; and when, after the first burst of fancy, I recollected that he might possibly not have adopted the native costume of that island, or, if he

had, that perhaps it would look too strange for him to wear it about London, I settled within myself that he was to be a tall, venerable-looking man, like the portraits of old Puritan divines which adorned our day-room; and as I had heard that "he was powerful in prayer," I adorned his right hand with that mystic weapon "all-prayer," with which Christian, when all other means have failed, finally vanquishes the fiend—which instrument, in my mind, was somewhat after the model of an infernal sort of bill or halbert—all hooks, edges, spikes, and crescents—which I had passed, shuddering, once, in the hand of an old suit of armour in Wardour Street.

He came—and with him the two ministers who often drank tea with my mother; both of whom, as they played some small part in the drama of my after-life, I may as well describe here. The elder was a little, sleek, silver-haired old man, with a blank, weak face, just like a white rabbit. He loved me, and I loved him too, for there were always lollipops in his pocket for me and Susan. Had his head been equal to his heart!—but what has been was to be—and the dissenting clergy, with a few noble exceptions among the Independents, are not the strong men of the day—none know that better than the workmen. The old man's name was Bowyer. The other, Mr. Wigginton, was a younger man; tall, grim, dark, bilious, with a narrow forehead, retreating suddenly from his eyebrows up to a conical peak of black hair over his ears. He preached "higher doctrine," *i.e.*, more fatalist and antinomian than his gentler colleague,—and, having also a stentorian voice, was much the greater favourite at the chapel. I hated him—and if any man ever deserved hatred, he did.

Well, they came. My heart was in my mouth as I opened the door to them, and sank back again to the very lowest depths of my inner man when my eyes fell on the face and figure of the missionary—a squat, red-faced, pig-eyed, low-browed man, with great soft lips that opened back to his very ears: sensuality, conceit, and cunning marked on every feature—an innate vulgarity, from which the artisan and the child recoil with an instinct as

true, perhaps truer, than that of the courtier, showing itself in every tone and motion—I shrank into a corner, so crestfallen that I could not even exert myself to hand round the bread and butter, for which I got duly scolded afterwards. Oh! that man!—how he bawled and contradicted, and laid down the law, and spoke to my mother in a fondling, patronizing way, which made me, I knew not why, boil over with jealousy and indignation. How he filled his teacup half full of the white sugar to buy which my mother had curtailed her yesterday's dinner—how he drained the few remaining drops of the threepennyworth of cream, with which Susan was stealing off to keep it as an unexpected treat for my mother at breakfast the next morning—how he talked of the natives, not as St. Paul might of his converts, but as a planter might of his slaves; overlaying all his unintentional confessions of his own greed and prosperity, with cant, flimsy enough for even a boy to see through, while his eyes were not blinded with the superstition that a man must be pious who sufficiently interlards his speech with a jumble of old English picked out of our translation of the New Testament. Such was the man I saw. I don't deny that all are not like him. I believe there are noble men of all denominations, doing their best according to their light, all over the world; but such was the one I saw—and the men who were sent home to plead the missionary cause, whatever the men may be like who stay behind and work, are, from my small experience, too often such. It appears to me to be the rule that many of those who go abroad as missionaries, go simply because they are men of such inferior powers and attainments that if they stayed in England they would starve.

Three parts of his conversation, after all, was made up of abuse of the missionaries of the Church of England, not for doing nothing, but for being so much more successful than his own sect; accusing them, in the same breath, of being just of the inferior type of which he was himself, and also of being mere University fine gentlemen. Really, I do not wonder, upon his own showing, at the savages preferring them to him; and I was pleased to

hear the old white-headed minister gently interpose at the end of one of his tirades—"We must not be jealous, my brother, if the Establishment has discovered what we, I hope, shall find out some day, that it is not wise to draft our missionaries from the offscouring of the ministry, and serve God with that which costs us nothing except the expense of providing for them beyond seas."

There was somewhat of a roguish twinkle in the old man's eye as he said it, which emboldened me to whisper a question to him.

"Why is it, Sir, that in olden times the heathens used to crucify the missionaries and burn them, and now they give them beautiful farms, and build them houses, and carry them about on their backs?"

The old man seemed a little puzzled, and so did the company, to whom he smilingly retailed my question.

As nobody seemed inclined to offer a solution, I ventured one myself.

"Perhaps the heathens are grown better than they used to be?"

"The heart of man," answered the tall, dark minister, "is, and ever was, equally at enmity with God."

"Then, perhaps," I ventured again, "what the missionaries preach now is not quite the same as what the missionaries used to preach in St. Paul's time, and so the heathens are not so angry at it?"

My mother looked thunder at me, and so did all except my white-headed friend, who said, gently enough,

"It may be that the child's words come from God."

Whether they did or not, the child took very good care to speak no more words till he was alone with his mother; and then finished off that disastrous evening by a punishment for the indecency of saying, before his little sister, that he thought it "a great pity the missionaries taught black people to wear ugly coats and trousers; they must have looked so much handsomer running about with nothing on but feathers and strings of shells."

So the missionary dream died out of me, by a foolish and illogical antipathy enough; though, after all, it was a child of my imagination only, not of my heart; and the

fancy, having bred it, was able to kill it also. And David became my ideal. To be a shepherd-boy, and sit among beautiful mountains, and sing hymns of my own making, and kill lions and bears, with now and then the chance of a stray giant—what a glorious life! And if David slew giants with a sling and a stone, why should not I?—at all events, one ought to know how; so I made a sling out of an old garter and some string, and began to practise in the little back-yard. But my first shot broke a neighbour's window, value sevenpence, and the next flew back in my face, and cut my head open; so I was sent supperless to bed for a week, till the sevenpence had been duly saved out of my hungry stomach—and, on the whole, I found the hymn-writing side of David's character the more feasible; so I tried, and with much brains-beating, committed the following lines to a scrap of dirty paper. And it was strangely significant, that in this, my first attempt, there was an instinctive denial of the very doctrine of "particular redemption," which I had been hearing all my life, and an instinctive yearning after the very Being in whom I had been told I had "no part nor lot" till I was "converted." Here they are. I am not ashamed to call them—doggerel though they be—an inspiration from Him of whom they speak. If not from Him, good readers, from whom?

Jesus, He loves one and all;
Jesus, He loves children small;
Their souls are sitting round His feet,
On high, before His mercy-seat.

When on earth He walked in shame,
Children small unto Him came;
At His feet they knelt and prayed,
On their heads His hands He laid.

Came a spirit on them then,
Greater than of mighty men;
A spirit gentle, meek, and mild,
A spirit good for king and child.

Oh! that spirit give to me,
Jesus, Lord, where'er I be!
So——

But I did not finish them, not seeing very clearly what to do with that spirit when I obtained it; for, indeed, it seemed a much finer thing to fight material Apollyons with material swords of iron, like my friend Christian, or to go bear and lion hunting with David, than to convert heathens by meekness—at least, if true meekness was at all like that of the missionary whom I had lately seen.

I showed the verses in secret to my little sister. My mother heard us singing them together, and extorted, grimly enough, a confession of the authorship. I expected to be punished for them (I was accustomed weekly to be punished for all sorts of deeds and words, of the harmfulness of which I had not a notion). It was, therefore, an agreeable surprise when the old minister, the next Sunday evening, patted my head, and praised me for them.

"A hopeful sign of young grace, brother," said he to the dark tall man. "May we behold here an infant Timothy!"

"Bad doctrine, brother, in that first line—bad doctrine, which I am sure he did not learn from our excellent sister here. Remember, my boy, henceforth, that Jesus does *not* love one and all—not that I am angry with you. The carnal mind cannot be expected to understand divine things, any more than the beasts that perish. Nevertheless, the blessed message of the Gospel stands true, that Christ loves none but His Bride, the Church. His merits, my poor child, extend to none but the elect. Ah! my dear sister Locke, how delightful to think of the narrow way of discriminating grace! How it enhances the believer's view of his own exceeding privileges, to remember that there be few that be saved!"

I said nothing. I thought myself only too lucky to escape so well from the danger of having done anything out of my own head. But somehow Susan and I never altered it when we sang it to ourselves.

* * * * * *

I thought it necessary, for the sake of those who might read my story, to string together these few scattered recollections of my boyhood,—to give, as it were, some

sample of the cotyledon leaves of my young life-plant, and of the soil in which it took root, ere it was transplanted—but I will not forestal my sorrows. After all, they have been but types of the woes of thousands who "die and give no sign." Those to whom the struggles of every, even the meanest, human being are scenes of an awful drama, every incident of which is to be noted with reverent interest, will not find them void of meaning; while the life which opens in my next chapter is, perhaps, full enough of mere dramatic interest (and whose life is not, were it but truly written ?) to amuse merely as a novel. Ay, grim and real is the action and suffering which begins with my next page,—as you yourself would have found, high-born reader (if such chance to light upon this story), had you found yourself at fifteen, after a youth of convent-like seclusion, settled, apparently for life—in a tailor's workshop.

Ay—laugh !—we tailors can quote poetry as well as make your court-dresses:

> You sit in a cloud and sing, like pictured angels,
> And say the world runs smooth—while right below
> Welters the black fermenting heap of griefs
> Whereon your state is built. . . . .

CHAPTER II.

THE TAILOR'S WORKROOM.

HAVE you done laughing! Then I will tell you how the thing came to pass.

My father had a brother, who had steadily risen in life, in proportion as my father fell. They had both begun life in a grocer's shop. My father saved enough to marry, when of middle age, a woman of his own years, and set up a little shop, where there were far too many such already, in the hope—to him, as to the rest of the world, quite just and innocent—of drawing away as much as possible of his neighbours' custom. He failed, died—as so many small tradesmen do—of bad debts and a broken heart, and left us beggars. His brother, more prudent, had, in the meantime, risen to be foreman; then he married, on the strength of his handsome person, his master's blooming widow; and rose and rose, year by year, till, at the time of which I speak, he was owner of a first-rate grocery establishment in the City, and a pleasant villa near Herne Hill, and had a son, a year or two older than myself, at King's College, preparing for Cambridge and the Church—that being now-a-days the approved method of converting a tradesman's son into a gentleman,—whereof let artisans, and gentlemen also, take note.

My aristocratic readers—if I ever get any, which I pray God I may—may be surprised at so great an inequality of fortune between two cousins; but the thing is common in our class. In the higher ranks, a difference in income implies none in education or manners, and the poor

"gentleman" is a fit companion for dukes and princes—thanks to the old usages of Norman chivalry, which after all were a democratic protest against the sovereignty, if not of rank, at least of money. The knight, however penniless, was the prince's equal, even his superior, from whose hands he must receive knighthood; and the "squire of low degree," who honourably earned his spurs, rose also into that guild, whose qualifications, however barbaric, were still higher ones than any which the pocket gives. But in the commercial classes money most truly and fearfully "makes the man." A difference in income, as you go lower, makes more and more difference in the supply of the common necessaries of life; and worse—in education and manners, in all which polishes the man, till you may see often, as in my case, one cousin a Cambridge undergraduate, and the other a tailor's journeyman.

My uncle one day came down to visit us, resplendent in a black velvet waistcoat, thick gold chain, and acres of shirt-front; and I and Susan were turned to feed on our own curiosity and awe in the back-yard, while he and my mother were closeted together for an hour or so in the living-room. When he was gone, my mother called me in, and with eyes which would have been tearful had she allowed herself such a weakness before us, told me very solemnly and slowly, as if to impress upon me the awfulness of the matter, that I was to be sent to a tailor's workrooms the next day.

And an awful step it was in her eyes, as she laid her hands on my head and murmured to herself, "Behold, I send you forth as a lamb in the midst of wolves. Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." And then, rising hastily to conceal her own emotion, fled upstairs, where we could hear her throw herself on her knees by the bedside, and sob piteously.

That evening was spent dolefully enough, in a sermon of warnings against all manner of sins and temptations, the very names of which I had never heard, but to which, as she informed me, I was by my fallen nature altogether prone: and right enough was she in so saying, though as

often happens, the temptations from which I was in real danger were just the ones of which she had no notion —fighting more or less extinct Satans, as Mr. Carlyle says, and quite unconscious of the real, modern, man-devouring Satan close at her elbow.

To me, in spite of all the terror which she tried to awaken in me, the change was not unwelcome; at all events, it promised me food for my eyes and my ears,— some escape from the narrow cage in which, though I hardly dare confess it to myself, I was beginning to pine. Little I dreamt to what a darker cage I was to be translated! Not that I accuse my uncle of neglect or cruelty, though the thing was altogether of his commanding. He was as generous to us as society required him to be. We were entirely dependent on him, as my mother told me then for the first time, for support. And had he not a right to dispose of my person, having bought it by an allowance to my mother of five-and-twenty pounds a year? I did not forget that fact; the thought of my dependence on him rankled in me, till it almost bred hatred in me to a man who had certainly never done or meant anything to me but in kindness. For what could he make me but a tailor—or a shoemaker? A pale, consumptive, rickety, weakly boy, all forehead and no muscle — have not clothes and shoes been from time immemorial the appointed work of such? The fact that that weakly frame is generally compensated by a proportionally increased activity of brain, is too unimportant to enter into the calculations of the great King Laissez-faire. Well, my dear Society, it is you that suffer for the mistake, after all, more than we. If you do tether your cleverest artisans on tailors' shopboards and cobblers' benches, and they—as sedentary folk will—fall a thinking, and come to strange conclusions thereby, they really ought to be much more thankful to you than you are to them. If Thomas Cooper had passed his first five-and-twenty years at the plough tail instead of the shoemaker's awl, many words would have been left unsaid which, once spoken, working men are not likely to forget.

With a beating heart I shambled along by my mother's

side next day to Mr. Smith's shop, in a street off Piccadilly; and stood by her side, just within the door, waiting till some one would condescend to speak to us, and wondering when the time would come when I, like the gentleman who skipped up and down the shop, should shine glorious in patent-leather boots, and a blue satin tie sprigged with gold.

Two personages, both equally magnificent, stood talking with their backs to us; and my mother, in doubt, like myself, as to which of them was the tailor, at last summoned up courage to address the wrong one, by asking if he were Mr. Smith.

The person addressed answered by a most polite smile and bow, and assured her that he had not that honour; while the other he-he'ed, evidently a little flattered by the mistake, and then uttered in a tremendous voice these words:

"I have nothing for you, my good woman—go. Mr. Elliot! how did you come to allow these people to get into the establishment?"

"My name is Locke, sir, and I was to bring my son here this morning."

"Oh—ah!—Mr. Elliot, see to these persons. As I was saying, my lard, the crimson velvet suit, about thirty-five guineas. By-the-by, that coat ours? I thought so—idea grand and light—masses well broken—very fine chiaro-scuro about the whole—an aristocratic wrinkle just above the hips—which I flatter myself no one but myself and my friend Mr. Cooke really do understand. The vapid smoothness of the door dummy, my lard, should be confined to the regions of the Strand. Mr. Elliot, where are you? Just be so good as to show his lardship that lovely new thing in drab and *blue foncé*. Ah! your lardship can't wait.—Now, my good woman, is this the young man?"

"Yes," said my mother: "and—and—God deal so with you, sir, as you deal with the widow and the orphan."

"Oh—ah—that will depend very much, I should say, on how the widow and the orphan deal with me. Mr.

Elliot, take this person into the office and transact the little formalities with her. Jones, take the young man up-stairs to the work-room."

I stumbled after Mr. Jones up a dark, narrow, iron staircase till we emerged through a trap-door into a garret at the top of the house. I recoiled with disgust at the scene before me; and here I was to work—perhaps through life! A low lean-to room, stifling me with the combined odours of human breath and perspiration, stale beer, the sweet sickly smell of gin, and the sour and hardly less disgusting one of new cloth. On the floor, thick with dust and dirt, scraps of stuff and ends of thread, sat some dozen haggard, untidy, shoeless men, with a mingled look of care and recklessness that made me shudder. The windows were tight closed to keep out the cold winter air; and the condensed breath ran in streams down the panes, chequering the dreary out-look of chimney-tops and smoke. The conductor handed me over to one of the men.

"Here, Crossthwaite, take this younker and make a tailor of him. Keep him next you, and prick him up with your needle if he shirks."

He disappeared down the trap-door, and mechanically, as if in a dream, I sat down by the man and listened to his instructions, kindly enough bestowed. But I did not remain in peace two minutes. A burst of chatter rose as the foreman vanished, and a tall, bloated, sharp-nosed young man next me bawled in my ear,—

"I say, young'un, fork out the tin and pay your footing at Conscrumption Hospital."

"What do you mean?"

"Aint he just green?—Down with the stumpy—a tizzy for a pot of half-and-half."

"I never drink beer."

"Then never do," whispered the man at my side; "as sure as hell's hell, it's your only chance."

There was a fierce, deep earnestness in the tone which made me look up at the speaker, but the other instantly chimed in—

"Oh, yer don't, don't yer, my young Father Mathy?

then yer'll soon learn it here if yer want to keep yer victuals down."

"And I have promised to take my wages home to my mother."

"Oh criminy! hark to that, my coves! here's a chap as is going to take the blunt home to his mammy."

"T'aint much of it the old'un 'll see," said another. "Ven yer pockets it at the Cock and Bottle, my kiddy, yer won't find much of it left o' Sunday mornings."

"Don't his mother know he's out?" asked another, "and won't she know it—

> Ven he's sitting in his glory
> Half-price at the Victory.

Oh! no, ve never mentions her—her name is never heard. Certainly not, by no means. Why should it?"

"Well, if yer won't stand a pot," quoth the tall man, "I will, that's all, and blow temperance. 'A short life and a merry one,' says the tailor—

> The ministers talk a great deal about port,
> And they makes Cape wine very dear,
> But blow their hi's if ever they tries
> To deprive a poor cove of his beer.

Here, Sam, run to the Cock and Bottle for a pot of half-and-half to my score."

A thin, pale lad jumped up and vanished, while my tormentor turned to me:

"I say, young'un, do you know why we're nearer heaven here than our neighbours?"

"I shouldn't have thought so," answered I with a *naïveté* which raised a laugh, and dashed the tall man for a moment.

"Yer don't? then I'll tell yer. A cause we're a top of the house in the first place, and next place yer'll die here six months sooner nor if yer worked in the room below. Aint that logic and science, Orator?" appealing to Crossthwaite.

"Why?" asked I.

"A cause you get all the other floors' stinks up here

as well as your own. Concentrated essence of man's flesh, is this here as you're a breathing. Cellar workroom we calls Rheumatic Ward, because of the damp Ground-floor's Fever Ward—them as don't get typhus gets dysentery, and them as don't get dysentery gets typhus—your nose 'd tell yer why if you opened the back windy. First floor's Ashmy Ward — don't you hear 'um now through the cracks in the boards, a puffing away like a nest of young locomotives? And this here most august and upper-crust cockloft is the Conscrumptive Hospital. First you begins to cough, then you proceeds to expectorate—spittoons, as you see, perwided free gracious for nothing—fined a kivarten if you spits on the floor—

> Then your cheeks they grows red, and your nose it grows thin,
> And your bones they stick out, till they comes through your skin :

and then, when you've sufficiently covered the poor dear shivering bare backs of the hairystocracy—

> Die, die, die,
> Away you fly,
> Your soul is in the sky!

as the hinspired Shakspeare wittily remarks."

And the ribald lay down on his back, stretched himself out, and pretended to die in a fit of coughing, which last was, alas! no counterfeit, while poor I, shocked and bewildered, let my tears fall fast upon my knees.

"Mine him a pot!" roared one, "for talking about kicking the bucket. He's a nice young man to keep a cove's spirits up, and talk about 'a short life and a merry one.' Here comes the heavy. Hand it here to take the taste of that fellow's talk out of my mouth."

"Well, my young'un," recommenced my tormentor, "and how do you like your company?"

"Leave the boy alone," growled Crossthwaite; "don't you see he's crying?"

"Is that anything good to eat? Give me some on it if it is—it'll save me washing my face." And he took hold of my hair and pulled my head back.

"I'll tell you what, Jemmy Downes," said Crossthwaite, in a voice which made him draw back, "if you don't drop that, I'll give you such a taste of my tongue as shall turn you blue."

"You'd better try it on then. Do—only just now—if you please."

"Be quiet, you fool!" said another. "You're a pretty fellow to chaff the orator. He'll slang you up the chimney afore you can get your shoes on."

"Fine him a kivarten for quarrelling," cried another; and the bully subsided into a minute's silence, after a *sotto voce*—"Blow temperance, and blow all Chartists, say I!" and then delivered himself of his feelings in a doggerel song:

"Some folks leads coves a dance,
With their pledge of temperance,
And their plans for donkey sociation;
And their pockets full they crams
By their patriotic flams,
And then swears 'tis for the good of the nation.

But I don't care two inions
For political opinions,
While I can stand my heavy and my quartern;
For to drown dull care within,
In baccy, beer, and gin,
Is the prime of a working-tailor's fortin!

There's common sense for yer now; hand the pot here."

I recollect nothing more of that day, except that I bent myself to my work with assiduity enough to earn praises from Crossthwaite. It was to be done, and I did it. The only virtue I ever possessed (if virtue it be) is the power of absorbing my whole heart and mind in the pursuit of the moment, however dull or trivial, if there be good reason why it should be pursued at all.

I owe, too, an apology to my readers for introducing all this ribaldry. God knows, it is as little to my taste as it can be to theirs, but the thing exists; and those who live, if not by, yet still besides such a state of things, ought to know what the men are like to whose labour, ay, life-blood, they owe their luxuries. They are "their brothers'

keepers," let them deny it as they will. Thank God, many are finding that out; and the morals of the working tailors, as well as of other classes of artisans, are rapidly improving: a change which has been brought about partly by the wisdom and kindness of a few master tailors, who have built workshops fit for human beings, and have resolutely stood out against the iniquitous and destructive alterations in the system of employment. Among them I may, and will, whether they like it or not, make honourable mention of Mr. Willis, of St. James's Street, and Mr. Stultz, of Bond Street.

But nine-tenths of the improvement has been owing, not to the masters, but to the men themselves; and who among them, my aristocratic readers, do you think, have been the great preachers and practisers of temperance, thrift, charity, self-respect, and education. Who?—shriek not in your Belgravian saloons—the Chartists; the communist Chartists: upon whom you and your venal press heap every kind of cowardly execration and ribald slander. You have found out many things since Peterloo; add that fact to the number.

It may seem strange that I did not tell my mother into what a pandemonium I had fallen, and get her to deliver me; but a delicacy, which was not all evil, kept me back; I shrank from seeming to dislike to earn my daily bread, and still more from seeming to object to what she had appointed for me. Her will had been always law; it seemed a deadly sin to dispute it. I took for granted, too, that she knew what the place was like, and that, therefore, it must be right for me. And when I came home at night, and got back to my beloved missionary stories, I gathered materials enough to occupy my thoughts during the next day's work, and make me blind and deaf to all the evil around me. My mother, poor dear creature, would have denounced my day-dreams sternly enough, had she known of their existence; but were they not holy angels from heaven? guardians sent by that Father, whom I had been taught *not* to believe in, to shield my senses from pollution?

I was ashamed, too, to mention to my mother the

wickedness which I saw and heard. With the delicacy of an innocent boy, I almost imputed the very witnessing of it as a sin to myself; and soon I began to be ashamed of more than the mere sitting by and hearing. I found myself gradually learning slang-insolence, laughing at coarse jokes, taking part in angry conversations; my moral tone was gradually becoming lower; but yet the habit of prayer remained, and every night at my bedside, when I prayed to "be converted and made a child of God," I prayed that the same mercy might be extended to my fellow-workmen, "if they belonged to the number of the elect." Those prayers may have been answered in a wider and deeper sense than I then thought of.

But, altogether, I felt myself in a most distracted, rudderless state. My mother's advice I felt daily less and less inclined to ask. A gulf was opening between us; we were moving in two different worlds, and she saw it, and imputed it to me as a sin; and was the more cold to me by day, and prayed for me (as I knew afterwards) the more passionately while I slept. But help or teacher I had none. I knew not that I had a Father in heaven. How could He be my Father till I was converted? I was a child of the Devil, they told me; and now and then I felt inclined to take them at their word, and behave like one. No sympathizing face looked on me out of the wide heaven—off the wide earth, none. I was all boiling with new hopes, new temptations, new passions, new sorrows, and "I looked to the right hand and to the left, and no man cared for my soul."

I had felt myself from the first strangely drawn towards Crossthwaite, carefully as he seemed to avoid me, except to give me business directions in the workroom. He alone had shown me any kindness; and he, too, alone was untainted with the sin around him. Silent, moody, and preoccupied, he was yet the king of the room. His opinion was always asked, and listened to. His eye always cowed the ribald and the blasphemer; his songs, when he rarely broke out into merriment, were always rapturously applauded. Men hated, and yet respected him. I shrank from him at first, when I heard him called

a Chartist; for my dim notions of that class were, that they were a very wicked set of people, who wanted to kill all the soldiers and policemen and respectable people, and rob all the shops of their contents. But, Chartist or none, Crossthwaite fascinated me. I often found myself neglecting my work to study his face. I liked him, too, because he was as I was—small, pale, and weakly. He might have been five-and-twenty; but his looks, like those of too many a working man, were rather those of a man of forty. Wild grey eyes gleamed out from under huge knitted brows, and a perpendicular wall of brain, too large for his puny body. He was not only, I soon discovered, a water-drinker, but a strict "vegetarian" also; to which, perhaps, he owed a great deal of the almost preternatural clearness, volubility, and sensitiveness of his mind. But whether from his ascetic habits, or the unhealthiness of his trade, the marks of ill-health were upon him; and his sallow cheek, and ever-working lip, proclaimed too surely—

> The fiery soul which, working out its way,
> Fretted the pigmy body to decay;
> And o'er informed the tenement of clay.

I longed to open my heart to him. Instinctively I felt that he was a kindred spirit. Often, turning round suddenly in the workroom, I caught him watching me with an expression which seemed to say, "Poor boy, and art thou too one of us? Hast thou too to fight with poverty and guidelessness, and the cravings of an unsatisfied intellect, as I have done!" But when I tried to speak to him earnestly, his manner was peremptory and repellent. It was well for me that so it was—well for me, I see now, that it was not from him my mind received the first lessons in self-development. For guides did come to me in good time, though not such, perhaps, as either my mother or my readers would have chosen for me.

My great desire now was to get knowledge. By getting that I fancied, as most self-educated men are apt to do, I should surely get wisdom. Books, I thought, would tell

me all I needed. But where to get the books? And which? I had exhausted our small stock at home; I was sick and tired, without knowing why, of their narrow conventional view of everything. After all, I had been reading them all along, not for their doctrines but for their facts, and knew not where to find more, except in forbidden paths. I dare not ask my mother for books, for I dare not confess to her that religious ones were just what I did not want; and all history, poetry, science, I had been accustomed to hear spoken of as "carnal learning, human philosophy," more or less diabolic and ruinous to the soul. So, as usually happens in this life—"By the law was the knowledge of sin"—and unnatural restrictions on the development of the human spirit only associated with guilt of conscience, what ought to have been an innocent and necessary blessing.

My poor mother, not singular in her mistake, had sent me forth, out of an unconscious paradise into the evil world, without allowing me even the sad strength which comes from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; she expected in me the innocence of the dove, as if that was possible on such an earth as this, without the wisdom of the serpent to support it. She forbade me strictly to stop and look into the windows of print shops, and I strictly obeyed her. But she forbade me, too, to read any book which I had not first shown her; and that restriction, reasonable enough in the abstract, practically meant, in the case of a poor boy like myself, reading no books at all. And then came my first act of disobedience, the parent of many more. Bitterly have I repented it, and bitterly been punished. Yet, strange contradiction! I dare not wish it undone. But such is the great law of life. Punished for our sins we surely are; and yet how often they become our blessings, teaching us that which nothing else can teach us! Nothing else? One says so. Rich parents, I suppose, say so, when they send their sons to public schools "to learn life." We working men have too often no other teacher than our own errors. But surely, surely, the rich ought to have been able to discover some mode of education in which knowledge

may be acquired without the price of conscience. Yet they have not; and we must not complain of them for not giving such a one to the working man when they have not yet even given it to their own children.

In a street through which I used to walk homeward was an old book shop, piled and fringed outside and in with books of every age, size, and colour. And here I at last summoned courage to stop, and timidly and stealthily taking out some volume whose title attracted me, snatch hastily a few pages and hasten on, half fearful of being called on to purchase, half ashamed of a desire which I fancied every one else considered as unlawful as my mother did. Sometimes I was lucky enough to find the same volume several days running, and to take up the subject where I had left it off; and thus I contrived to hurry through a great deal of "Childe Harold," "Lara," and the "Corsair"—a new world of wonders to me. They fed, those poems, both my health and my diseases; while they gave me, little of them as I could understand, a thousand new notions about scenery and man, a sense of poetic melody and luxuriance as yet utterly unknown. They chimed in with all my discontent, my melancholy, my thirst after any life of action and excitement, however frivolous, insane, or even worse. I forgot the Corsair's sinful trade in his free and daring life; rather, I honestly eliminated the bad element—in which, God knows, I took no delight—and kept the good one. However that might be, the innocent—guilty pleasure grew on me day by day. Innocent, because human—guilty, because disobedient. But have I not paid the penalty?

One evening, however, I fell accidentally on a new book—"The Life and Poems of J. Bethune." I opened the story of his life—became interested, absorbed—and there I stood, I know not how long, on the greasy pavement, heedless of the passers who thrust me right and left, reading by the flaring gas-light that sad history of labour, sorrow, and death.—How the Highland cotter, in spite of disease, penury, starvation itself, and the daily struggle to earn his bread by digging and ditching, educated himself—how he toiled unceasingly with his

hands—how he wrote his poems in secret on dirty scraps of paper and old leaves of books—how thus he wore himself out, manful and godly, "bating not a jot of heart or hope," till the weak flesh would bear no more; and the noble spirit, unrecognized by the lord of the soil, returned to God who gave it. I seemed to see in his history a sad presage of my own. If he, stronger, more self-restrained, more righteous far than ever I could be, had died thus unknown, unassisted, in the stern battle with social disadvantages, what must be my lot?

And tears of sympathy, rather than of selfish fear, fell fast upon the book.

A harsh voice from the inner darkness of the shop startled me.

"Hoot, laddie, ye'll better no spoil my books wi' greeting ower them."

I replaced the book hastily, and was hurrying on, but the same voice called me back in a more kindly tone.

"Stop a wee, my laddie. I'm no angered wi' ye. Come in, and we'll just ha' a bit crack thegither."

I went in, for there was a geniality in the tone to which I was unaccustomed, and something whispered to me the hope of an adventure, as indeed it proved to be, if an event deserves that name which decided the course of my whole destiny.

"What war ye greeting about, then? What was the book?"

"'Bethune's Life and Poems,' sir," I said. "And certainly they did affect me very much."

"Affect ye? Ah, Johnnie Bethune, puir fellow! Ye maunna take on about sic like laddies, or ye'll greet your e'en out o' your head. It's mony a braw man beside Johnnie Bethune has gane Johnnie Bethune's gate."

Though unaccustomed to the Scotch accent, I could make out enough of this speech to be in nowise consoled by it. But the old man turned the conversation by asking me abruptly my name, and trade, and family.

"Hum, hum, widow, eh? puir body! work at Smith's shop, eh? Ye'll ken John Crossthwaite, then? ay? hum,

hum; an' ye're desirous o' reading books? vara weel—let's see your cawpabilities."

And he pulled me into the dim light of the little back window, shoved back his spectacles, and peering at me from underneath them, began, to my great astonishment, to feel my head all over.

"Hum, hum, a vara gude forehead—vara gude indeed. Causative organs large, perceptive ditto. Imagination superabundant—mun be heeded. Benevolence, conscientiousness, ditto, ditto. Caution—no that large—might be developed," with a quiet chuckle, "under a gude Scot's education. Just turn your head into profile, laddie. Hum, hum. Back o' the head a'thegither defective. Firmness sma'—love of approbation unco big. Beware o' leeing, as ye live; ye'll need it. Philoprogenitiveness gude. Ye'll be fond o' bairns, I'm guessing?"

"Of what?"

"Children, laddie,—children."

"Very," answered I, in utter dismay at what seemed to me a magical process for getting at all my secret failings.

"Hum, hum! Amative and combative organs sma'—a general want o' healthy animalism, as my freen' Mr. Deville wad say. And ye want to read books?"

I confessed my desire, without, alas! confessing that my mother had forbidden it.

"Vara weel; then books I'll lend ye, after I've had a crack wi' Crossthwaite aboot ye, gin I find his opinion o' ye satisfactory. Come to me the day after to-morrow. An' mind, here are my rules:—a' damage done to a book to be paid for, or na mair books lent; ye'll mind to take no books without leave; specially ye'll mind no to read in bed o' nights,—industrious folks ought to be sleeping' betimes, an' I'd no be a party to burning puir weans in their beds; and lastly, ye'll observe not to read mair than five books at once."

I assured him that I thought such a thing impossible; but he smiled in his saturnine way, and said—

"We'll see this day fortnight. Now, then, I've observed ye for a month past over that aristocratic Byron's

poems. And I'm willing to teach the young idea how to shoot—but no to shoot itself; so ye'll just leave alane that vinegary, soul-destroying trash, and I'll lend ye, gin I hear a gude report of ye, 'The Paradise Lost,' o' John Milton—a gran' classic model; and for the doctrine o't, it's just aboot as gude as ye'll hear elsewhere the noo. So gang your gate, and tell John Crossthwaite, privately, auld Sandy Mackaye wad like to see him the morn's night."

I went home in wonder and delight. Books! books! books! I should have my fill of them at last. And when I said my prayers at night, I thanked God for this unexpected boon; and then remembered that my mother had forbidden it. That thought checked the thanks, but not the pleasure. Oh, parents! are there not real sins enough in the world already, without your defiling it, over and above, by inventing new ones?

CHAPTER III.

SANDY MACKAYE.

THAT day fortnight came,—and the old Scotchman's words came true. Four books of his I had already, and I came in to borrow a fifth; whereon he began with a solemn chuckle:

"Eh, laddie, laddie, I've been treating ye as the grocers do their new prentices. They first gie the boys three days' free warren among the figs and the sugar-candy, and they get scunnered wi' sweets after that. Noo, then, my lad, ye've just been reading four books in three days —and here's a fifth. Ye'll no open this again."

"Oh!" I cried, piteously enough, "just let me finish what I am reading. I'm in the middle of such a wonderful account of the Hornitos of Jurullo."

"Hornets or wasps, a swarm o' them ye're like to have at this rate; and a very bad substitute ye'll find them for the Attic bee. Now tak' tent. I'm no in the habit of speaking without deliberation, for it saves a man a great deal of trouble in changing his mind. If ye canna traduce to me a page o' Virgil by this day three months, ye read no more o' my books. Desultory reading is the bane o' lads. Ye maun begin with self-restraint and method, my man, gin ye intend to gie yoursel' a liberal education. So I'll just mak' you a present of an auld Latin grammar, and ye maun begin where your betters ha' begun before you."

"But who will teach me Latin?"

"Hoot, man! who'll teach a man anything except himsel'? It's only gentlefolks and puir aristocrat bodies

that go to be spoilt wi' tutors and pedagogues, cramming and loading them wi' knowledge, as ye'd load a gun, to shoot it all out again, just as it went down, in a college examination, and forget all about it after."

"Ah!" I sighed, "if I could have gone to college!"

"What for, then? My father was a Hieland farmer, and yet he was a weel learned man: and 'Sandy, my lad,' he used to say, 'a man kens just as much as he's taught himsel', and na mair. So get wisdom; and wi' all your getting, get understanding.' And so I did. And mony's the Greek exercise I've written in the cowbyres. And mony's the page o' Virgil, too, I've turned into good Dawric Scotch to ane that's dead and gane, poor hizzie, sitting under the same plaid, with the sheep feeding round us, up among the hills, looking out ower the broad blue sea, and the wee haven wi' the fishing cobles——"

There was a long solemn pause. I cannot tell why, but I loved the man from that moment; and I thought, too, that he began to love me. Those few words seemed a proof of confidence, perhaps all the deeper, because accidental and unconscious.

I took the Virgil which he lent me, with Hamilton's literal translation between the lines, and an old tattered Latin grammar; I felt myself quite a learned man—actually the possessor of a Latin book! I regarded as something almost miraculous the opening of this new field for my ambition. Not that I was consciously, much less selfishly, ambitious. I had no idea as yet to be anything but a tailor to the end; to make clothes—perhaps in a less infernal atmosphere—but still to make clothes and live thereby. I did not suspect that I possessed powers above the mass. My intense longing after knowledge had been to me like a girl's first love—a thing to be concealed from every eye—to be looked at askance even by myself, delicious as it was, with holy shame and trembling. And thus it was not cowardice merely, but natural modesty, which put me on a hundred plans of concealing my studies from my mother, and even from my sister.

I slept in a little lean-to garret at the back of the house, some ten feet long by six wide. I could just stand upright against the inner wall, while the roof on the other side ran down to the floor. There was no fire-place in it, or any means of ventilation. No wonder I coughed all night accordingly, and woke about two every morning with choking throat and aching head. My mother often said that the room was "too small for a Christian to sleep in, but where could she get a better?"

Such was my only study. I could not use it as such, however, at night without discovery; for my mother carefully looked in every evening, to see that my candle was out. But when my kind cough woke me, I rose, and creeping like a mouse about the room—for my mother and sister slept in the next chamber, and every sound was audible through the narrow partition—I drew my darling books out from under a board of the floor, one end of which I had gradually loosened at odd minutes, and with them a rushlight, earned by running on messages, or by taking bits of work home, and finishing them for my fellows.

No wonder that with this scanty rest, and this complicated exertion of hands, eyes, and brain, followed by the long dreary day's work of the shop, my health began to fail; my eyes grew weaker and weaker; my cough became more acute; my appetite failed me daily. My mother noticed the change, and questioned me about it, affectionately enough. But I durst not, alas! tell the truth. It was not one offence, but the arrears of months of disobedience which I should have had to confess; and so arose infinite false excuses, and petty prevarications, which embittered and clogged still more my already overtasked spirit. About my own ailments—formidable as I believed they were—I never had a moment's anxiety. The expectation of early death was as unnatural to me as it is, I suspect, to almost all. I die? Had I not hopes, plans, desires, infinite? Could I die while they were unfulfilled? Even now, I do not believe I shall die yet. I will not believe it—but let that pass.

Yes, let that pass. Perhaps I have lived long enough —longer than many a grey-headed man.

> There is a race of mortals who become
> Old in their youth, and die ere middle age.

And might not those days of mine then have counted as months?—those days when, before starting forth to walk two miles to the shop at six o'clock in the morning, I sat some three or four hours shivering on my bed, putting myself into cramped and painful postures, not daring even to cough, lest my mother should fancy me unwell, and come in to see me, poor dear soul!—my eyes aching over the page, my feet wrapped up in the bedclothes, to keep them from the miserable pain of the cold; longing, watching, dawn after dawn, for the kind summer mornings, when I should need no candlelight. Look at the picture awhile, ye comfortable folks, who take down from your shelves what books you like best at the moment, and then lie back, amid prints and statuettes, to grow wise in an easy-chair, with a blazing fire and a camphine lamp. The lower classes uneducated! Perhaps you would be so too, if learning cost you the privation which it costs some of them.

But this concealment could not last. My only wonder is, that I continued to get whole months of undiscovered study. One morning, about four o'clock, as might have been expected, my mother heard me stirring, came in, and found me sitting crosslegged on my bed, stitching away, indeed, with all my might, but with a Virgil open before me.

She glanced at the book, clutched it with one hand and my arm with the other, and sternly asked,

"Where did you get this heathen stuff?"

A lie rose to my lips; but I had been so gradually entangled in the loathed meshes of a system of concealment, and consequent prevarication, that I felt as if one direct falsehood would ruin for ever my fast-failing self-respect, and I told her the whole truth. She took the book and left the room. It was Saturday morning, and

I spent two miserable days, for she never spoke a word to me till the two ministers had made their appearance, and drank their tea on Sunday evening: then at last she opened:

"And now, Mr. Wigginton, what account have you of this Mr. Mackaye, who has seduced my unhappy boy from the paths of obedience?"

"I am sorry to say, madam," answered the dark man, with a solemn snuffle, "that he proves to be a most objectionable and altogether unregenerate character. He is, as I am informed, neither more nor less than a Chartist, and an open blasphemer."

"He is not!" I interrupted, angrily. "He has told me more about God, and given me better advice, than any human being, except my mother."

"Ah! madam, so thinks the unconverted heart, ignorant that the god of the Deist is not the God of the Bible—a consuming fire to all but His beloved elect; the god of the Deist, unhappy youth, is a mere self-invented, all-indulgent phantom—a will-o'-the-wisp, deluding the unwary, as he has deluded you, into the slough of carnal reason and shameful profligacy."

"Do you mean to call me a profligate?" I retorted fiercely, for my blood was up, and I felt I was fighting for all which I prized in the world: "if you do, you lie. Ask my mother when I ever disobeyed her before? I have never touched a drop of anything stronger than water; I have slaved over-hours to pay for my own candle, I have!—I have no sins to accuse myself of, and neither you nor any person know of any. Do you call me a profligate because I wish to educate myself and rise in life?"

"Ah!" groaned my poor mother to herself, "still unconvinced of sin!"

"The old Adam, my dear madam, you see,—standing, as he always does, on his own filthy rags of works, while all the imaginations of his heart are only evil continually. Listen to me, poor sinner——"

"I will not listen to you," I cried, the accumulated disgust of years bursting out once and for all, "for I hate and

despise you, eating my poor mother here out of house and home. You are one of those who creep into widows' houses, and for pretence make long prayers. You, sir, I will hear," I went on, turning to the dear old man who had sat by shaking his white locks with a sad and puzzled air, "for I love you."

"My dear sister Locke," he began, "I really think sometimes—that is, ahem—with your leave, brother—I am almost disposed—but I should wish to defer to your superior zeal—yet, at the same time, perhaps, the desire for information, however carnal in itself, may be an instrument in the Lord's hands—you know what I mean. I always thought him a gracious youth, madam, didn't you? And perhaps—I only observe it in passing—the Lord's people among the dissenting connexions are apt to undervalue human learning as a means—of course, I mean, only as a means. It is not generally known, I believe, that our reverend Puritan patriarchs, Howe and Baxter, Owen and many more, were not altogether unacquainted with heathen authors; nay, that they may have been called absolutely learned men. And some of our leading ministers are inclined—no doubt they will be led rightly in so important a matter—to follow the example of the Independents in educating their young ministers, and turning Satan's weapons of heathen mythology against himself, as St. Paul is said to have done. My dear boy, what books have you now got by you of Mr. Mackaye's?"

"Milton's Poems and a Latin Virgil."

"Ah!" groaned the dark man; "will poetry, will Latin save an immortal soul?"

"I'll tell you what, sir; you say yourself that it depends on God's absolute counsel whether I am saved or not. So, if I am elect, I shall be saved whatever I do; and if I am not, I shall be damned whatever I do; and in the mean time you had better mind your own business, and let me do the best I can for this life, as the next is all settled for me."

This flippant, but after all not unreasonable speech, seemed to silence the man; and I took the opportunity

of running up-stairs and bringing down my Milton. The old man was speaking as I re-entered.

"And you know, my dear madam, Mr. Milton was a true converted man, and a Puritan."

"He was Oliver Cromwell's secretary," I added.

"Did he teach you to disobey your mother?" asked my mother.

I did not answer; and the old man, after turning over a few leaves, as if he knew the book well, looked up.

"I think, madam, you might let the youth keep these books, if he will promise, as I am sure he will, to see no more of Mr. Mackaye."

I was ready to burst out crying, but I made up my mind and answered,

"I must see him once again, or he will think me so ungrateful. He is the best friend that I ever had, except you, mother. Besides, I do not know if he will lend me any, after this."

My mother looked at the old minister, and then gave a sullen assent.

"Promise me only to see him once—but I cannot trust you. You have deceived me once, Alton, and you may again!"

"I shall not, I shall not," I answered proudly. "You do not know me"—and I spoke true.

"You do not know yourself, my poor dear foolish child!" she replied—and that was true too.

"And now, dear friends," said the dark man, "let us join in offering up a few words of special intercession."

We all knelt down, and I soon discovered that by the special intercession was meant a string of bitter and groundless slanders against poor me, twisted into the form of a prayer for my conversion, "if it were God's will." To which I responded with a closing "Amen," for which I was sorry afterwards, when I recollected that it was said in merely insolent mockery. But the little faith I had was breaking up fast—not altogether, surely, by my own fault.*

* The portraits of the minister and the missionary are surely exceptions to their class, rather than the average. The Baptists

At all events, from that day I was emancipated from modern Puritanism. The ministers both avoided all serious conversation with me; and my mother did the same; while, with a strength of mind, rare among women, she never alluded to the scene of that Sunday evening. It was a rule with her never to recur to what was once done and settled. What was to be, might be prayed over. But it was to be endured in silence; yet wider and wider ever from that time opened the gulf between us.

I went trembling the next afternoon to Mackaye and told my story. He first scolded me severely for disobeying my mother. "He that begins o' that gate, laddie, ends by disobeying God and his ain conscience. Gin ye're to be a scholar, God will make you one—and if not, ye'll no mak' yoursel' ane in spite o' Him and His commandments." And then he filled his pipe and chuckled away in silence; at last he exploded in a horse-laugh.

"So ye gied the ministers a bit o' yer mind? 'The deil's amang the tailors' in gude earnest, as the sang says. There's Johnnie Crossthwaite kicked the Papist priest out o' his house yestreen. Puir ministers, it's ill times wi' them! They gang about keckling and screighing after the working men, like a hen that's hatched ducklings when she sees them tak' the water. Little Dunkeld's coming to London sune, I'm thinking.

> Hech! sic a parish, a parish, a parish;
> Hech! sic a parish as little Dunkeld!

have had their Andrew Fuller and Robert Hall, and among missionaries Dr. Carey, and noble spirits in plenty. But such men as those who excited Alton Locke's disgust are to be met with, in every sect; in the Church of England, and in the Church of Rome. And it is a real and fearful scandal to the young, to see such men listened to as God's messengers, in spite of their utter want of any manhood or virtue, simply because they are "orthodox," each according to the shibboleths of his hearers, and possess that vulpine "discretion of dulness," whose miraculous might Dean Swift sets forth in his "Essay on the Fates of Clergymen." Such men do exist, and prosper; and as long as they are allowed to do so, Alton Lockes will meet them, and be scandalized by them.—Ed.

They hae stickit the minister, hanged the precentor,
Dung down the steeple, and drucken the bell."

"But may I keep the books a little while, Mr. Mackaye?"

"Keep them till ye die, gin ye will. What is the worth o' them to me? What is the worth o' anything to me, puir auld deevil, that ha' no half a dizen years to live at the furthest. God bless ye, my bairn; gang hame, and mind your mither, or it's little gude books 'll do ye."

CHAPTER IV.

TAILORS AND SOLDIERS.

I WAS now thrown again utterly on my own resources. I read and re-read Milton's "Poems" and Virgil's "Æneid" for six more months at every spare moment; thus spending over them, I suppose, all in all, far more time than most gentlemen have done. I found, too, in the last volume of Milton, a few of his select prose works: the "Areopagitica," the "Defence of the English People," and one or two more, in which I gradually began to take an interest; and, little of them as I could comprehend, I was awed by their tremendous depth and power, as well as excited by the utterly new trains of thought into which they led me. Terrible was the amount of bodily fatigue which I had to undergo in reading at every spare moment, while walking to and fro from my work, while sitting up, often from midnight till dawn, stitching away to pay for the tallow-candle which I burnt, till I had to resort to all sorts of uncomfortable contrivances for keeping myself awake, even at the expense of bodily pain—Heaven forbid that I should weary my readers by describing them! Young men of the upper classes, to whom study—pursue it as intensely as you will—is but the business of the day, and every spare moment relaxation; little you guess the frightful drudgery undergone by a man of the people who has vowed to educate himself,—to live at once two lives, each as severe as the whole of yours,—to bring to the self-imposed toil of intellectual improvement, a body and brain already worn out by a day of toilsome manual labour. I did it. God forbid,

though, that I should take credit to myself for it. Hundreds more have done it, with still fewer advantages than mine. Hundreds more, an ever-increasing army of martyrs, are doing it at this moment: of some of them, too, perhaps you may hear hereafter.

I had read through Milton, as I said, again and again; I had got out of him all that my youth and my unregulated mind enabled me to get. I had devoured, too, not without profit, a large old edition of "Fox's Martyrs," which the venerable minister lent me, and now I was hungering again for fresh food, and again at a loss where to find it.

I was hungering, too, for more than information—for a friend. Since my intercourse with Sandy Mackaye had been stopped, six months had passed without my once opening my lips to any human being upon the subjects with which my mind was haunted day and night. I wanted to know more about poetry, history, politics, philosophy—all things in heaven and earth. But, above all, I wanted a faithful and sympathizing ear into which to pour all my doubts, discontents, and aspirations. My sister Susan, who was one year younger than myself, was growing into a slender, pretty, hectic girl of sixteen. But she was altogether a devout Puritan. She had just gone through the process of conviction of sin and conversion; and being looked upon at the chapel as an especially gracious professor, was either unable or unwilling to think or speak on any subject, except on those to which I felt a growing distaste. She had shrunk from me, too, very much, since my ferocious attack that Sunday evening on the dark minister, who was her special favourite. I remarked it, and it was a fresh cause of unhappiness and perplexity.

At last I made up my mind, come what would, to force myself upon Crossthwaite. He was the only man whom I knew who seemed able to help me; and his very reserve had invested him with a mystery, which served to heighten my imagination of his powers. I waylaid him one day coming out of the workroom to go home, and plunged at once desperately into the matter.

"Mr. Crossthwaite, I want to speak to you. I want to ask you to advise me."

"I have known that a long time."

"Then why did you never say a kind word to me?"

"Because I was waiting to see whether you were worth saying a kind word to. It was but the other day, remember, you were a bit of a boy. Now, I think, I may trust you with a thing or two. Besides, I wanted to see whether you trusted me enough to ask me. Now you've broke the ice at last, in with you, head and ears, and see what you can fish out."

"I am very unhappy——"

"That's no new disorder that I know of."

"No; but I think the reason I am unhappy is a strange one; at least, I never read of but one person else in the same way. I want to educate myself, and I can't."

"You must have read precious little then, if you think yourself in a strange way. Bless the boy's heart! And what the dickens do you want to be educating yourself for, pray?"

This was said in a tone of good-humoured banter, which gave me courage. He offered to walk homewards with me; and, as I shambled along by his side, I told him all my story and all my griefs.

I never shall forget that walk. Every house, tree, turning, which we passed that day on our way, is indissolubly connected in my mind with some strange new thought which arose in me just at each spot; and recurs, so are the mind and the senses connected, as surely as I repass it.

I had been telling him about Sandy Mackaye. He confessed to an acquaintance with him; but in a reserved and mysterious way, which only heightened my curiosity.

We were going through the Horse Guards, and I could not help lingering to look with wistful admiration on the huge mustachoed war-machines who sauntered about the court-yard.

A tall and handsome officer, blazing in scarlet and gold, cantered in on a superb horse, and, dismounting, threw the reins to a dragoon as grand and gaudy as himself.

Did I envy him? Well—I was but seventeen. And there is something noble to the mind, as well as to the eye, in the great strong man, who can fight—a completeness, a self-restraint, a terrible sleeping power in him. As Mr. Carlyle says, "A soldier, after all, is one of the few remaining realities of the age. All other professions almost promise one thing, and perform—alas! what? But this man promises to fight, and does it; and, if he be told, will veritably take out a long sword and kill me."

So thought my companion, though the mood in which he viewed the fact was somewhat different from my own.

"Come on," he said, peevishly clutching me by the arm; "what do you want dawdling? Are you a nursery-maid, that you must stare at those red-coated butchers?" And a deep curse followed.

"What harm have they done you?"

"I should think I owed them turn enough."

"What?"

"They cut my father down at Sheffield,—perhaps with the very swords he helped to make,—because he would not sit still and starve, and see us starving around him, while those who fattened on the sweat of his brow, and on those lungs of his, which the sword-grinding dust was eating out day by day, were wantoning on venison and champagne. That's the harm they've done me, my chap!"

"Poor fellows!—they only did as they were ordered, I suppose."

"And what business have they to let themselves be ordered? What right, I say—what right has any free, reasonable soul on earth, to sell himself for a shilling a day to murder any man, right or wrong—even his own brother or his own father—just because such a whiskered, profligate jackanapes as that officer, without learning, without any god except his own looking-glass and his opera-dancer—a fellow who, just because he is born a gentleman, is set to command grey-headed men before he can command his own meanest passions. Good heavens! that the lives of

free men should be entrusted to such a stuffed cockatoo; and that free men should be such traitors to their country, traitors to their own flesh and blood, as to sell themselves, for a shilling a day and the smirks of the nursery-maids, to do that fellow's bidding!"

"What are you a-grumbling here about, my man?——gotten the cholera?" asked one of the dragoons, a huge, stupid-looking lad.

"About you, you young long-legged cut-throat," answered Crossthwaite, "and all your crew of traitors."

"Help, help, coomrades o' mine!" quoth the dragoon, bursting with laughter; "I'm gaun be moorthered wi' a little booy that's gane mad, and toorned Chartist."

I dragged Crossthwaite off; for what was jest to the soldiers, I saw, by his face, was fierce enough earnest to him. We walked on a little, in silence.

"Now," I said, "that was a good-natured fellow enough, though he was a soldier. You and he might have cracked many a joke together, if you did but understand each other;—and he was a countryman of yours, too."

"I may crack something else besides jokes with him some day," answered he, moodily.

"'Pon my word, you must take care how you do it. He is as big as four of us."

"That vile aristocrat, the old Italian poet—what's his name?—Ariosto—ay!—he knew which quarter the wind was making for, when he said that fire-arms would be the end of all your old knights and gentlemen in armour, that hewed down unarmed innocents as if they had been sheep. Gunpowder is your true leveller—dash physical strength! A boy's a man with a musket in his hand, my chap!"

"God forbid," I said, "that I should ever be made a man of in that way, or you either. I do not think we are quite big enough to make fighters; and if we were, what have we got to fight about?"

"Big enough to make fighters?" said he, half to himself; "or strong enough, perhaps?—or clever enough?—and yet Alexander was a little man, and the Petit Caporal, and Nelson, and Cæsar, too; and so was Saul of Tarsus, and weakly he was into the bargain. Æsop was a dwarf,

and so was Attila; Shakspeare was lame; Alfred, a rickety weakling; Byron, clubfooted;—so much for body *versus* spirit—brute force *versus* genius—genius."

I looked at him; his eyes glared like two balls of fire. Suddenly he turned to me.

"Locke, my boy, I've made an ass of myself, and got into a rage, and broken a good old resolution of mine, and a promise that I made to my dear little woman—bless her! and said things to you that you ought to know nothing of for this long time; but those red-coats always put me beside myself. God forgive me!" And he held out his hand to me cordially.

"I can quite understand your feeling deeply on one point," I said, as I took it, "after the sad story you told me; but why so bitter on all? What is there so very wrong about things, that we must begin fighting about it?"

"Bless your heart, poor innocent! What is wrong?—what is not wrong? Wasn't there enough in that talk with Mackaye, that you told me of just now, to show anybody that, who can tell a hawk from a handsaw?"

"Was it wrong in him to give himself such trouble about the education of a poor young fellow, who has no claim on him, who can never repay him?"

"No; that's just like him. He feels for the people, for he has been one of us. He worked in a printing-office himself many a year, and he knows the heart of the working man. But he didn't tell you the whole truth about education. He daren't tell you. No one who has money dare speak out his heart; not that he has much certainly; but the cunning old Scot that he is, he lives by the present system of things, and he won't speak ill of the bridge which carries him over—till the time comes."

I could not understand whither all this tended, and walked on silent and somewhat angry, at hearing the least slight cast on Mackaye.

"Don't you see, stupid?" he broke out at last. "What did he say to you about gentlemen being crammed by

tutors and professors? Have not you as good a right to them as any gentleman?"

"But he told me they were no use—that every man must educate himself."

"Oh! all very fine to tell you the grapes are sour, when you can't reach them. Bah, lad! Can't you see what comes of education?—that any dolt, provided he be a gentleman, can be doctored up at school and college, enough to make him play his part decently—his mighty part of ruling us, and riding over our heads, and picking our pockets, as parson, doctor, lawyer, member of parliament—while we—you now, for instance—cleverer than ninety-nine gentlemen out of a hundred, if you had one-tenth the trouble taken with you that is taken with every pig-headed son of an aristocrat——"

"Am I clever?" asked I, in honest surprise.

"What! haven't you found that out yet? Don't try to put that on me. Don't a girl know when she's pretty, without asking her neighbours?"

"Really, I never thought about it."

"More simpleton you. Old Mackaye has, at all events; though, canny Scotchman that he is, he'll never say a word to you about it, yet he makes no secret of it to other people. I heard him the other day telling some of our friends that you were a thorough young *genius*."

I blushed scarlet, between pleasure and a new feeling; was it ambition?

"Why, hav'n't you a right to aspire to a college education as any do-nothing canon there at the abbey, lad?"

"I don't know that I have a right to anything."

"What, not become what Nature intended you to become? What has she given you brains for, but to be educated and used? Oh! I heard a fine lecture upon that at our club the other night. There was a man there—a gentleman, too, but a thorough-going people's man, I can tell you, Mr. O'Flynn. What an orator that man is to be sure! The Irish Æschines, I hear they call him in Conciliation Hall. Isn't he the man to pitch into the Mammonites? 'Gentlemen and ladies,' says he, 'how long will a diabolic society'—no, an effete society it was

—'how long will an effete, emasculate, and effeminate society, in the diabolic selfishness of its eclecticism, refuse to acknowledge what my immortal countryman, Burke, calls the "Dei voluntatem in rebus revelatam"—the revelation of Nature's will in the phenomena of matter? The cerebration of each is the prophetic sacrament of the yet undeveloped possibilities of his mentation. The form of the brain alone, and not the possession of the vile gauds of wealth and rank, constitute man's only right to education—to the glories of art and science. Those beaming eyes and roseate lips beneath me proclaim a bevy of undeveloped Aspasias, of embryo Cleopatras, destined by Nature, and only restrained by man's injustice, from ruling the world by their beauty's eloquence. Those massive and beetling brows, gleaming with the lambent flames of patriotic ardour—what is needed to unfold them into a race of Shakspeares and of Gracchi, ready to proclaim with sword and lyre the divine harmonies of liberty, equality, and fraternity, before a quailing universe?'"

"It sounds very grand," replied I, meekly; "and I should like very much certainly to have a good education. But I can't see whose injustice keeps me out of one if I can't afford to pay for it."

"Whose? Why, the parson's to be sure. They've got the monopoly of education in England, and they get their bread by it at their public schools and universities; and of course it's their interest to keep up the price of their commodity, and let no man have a taste of it who can't pay down handsomely. And so those aristocrats of college dons go on rolling in riches, and fellowships, and scholarships, that were bequeathed by the people's friends in old times, just to educate poor scholars like you and me, and give us our rights as free men."

"But I thought the clergy were doing so much to educate the poor. At least, I hear all the dissenting ministers grumbling at their continual interference."

"Ay, educating them to make them slaves and bigots. They don't teach them what they teach their own sons. Look at the miserable smattering of general information

—just enough to serve as sauce for their great first and last lesson of 'Obey the powers that be'—whatever they be; leave us alone in our comforts, and starve patiently; do, like good boys, for it's God's will. And then, if a boy does show talent in school, do they help him up in life? Not they; when he has just learnt enough to whet his appetite for more, they turn him adrift again, to sink and drudge—to do his duty, as they call it, in that state of life to which society and the devil have called him."

"But there are innumerable stories of great Englishmen who have risen from the lowest ranks."

"Ay; but where are the stories of those who have not risen—of all the noble geniuses who have ended in desperation, drunkenness, starvation, suicide, because no one would take the trouble of lifting them up, and enabling them to walk in the path which Nature had marked out for them? Dead men tell no tales; and this old whited sepulchre, society, ain't going to turn informer against itself."

"I trust and hope," I said, sadly, "that if God intends me to rise, He will open the way for me; perhaps the very struggles and sorrows of a poor genius may teach him more than ever wealth and prosperity could."

"True, Alton, my boy! and that's my only comfort. It does make men of us, this bitter battle of *life*. We working men, when we do come out of the furnace, come out, not tinsel and papier maché, like those fops of red-tape statesmen, but steel and granite, Alton, my boy—that has been seven times tried in the fire: and woe to the papier maché gentleman that runs against us! But," he went on, sadly, "for one who comes safe through the furnace, there are a hundred who crack in the burning. You are a young bear, my lad, with all your sorrows before you; and you'll find that a working man's training is like the Red Indian children's. The few who are strong enough to stand it grow up warriors; but all those who are not fire-and-water-proof by nature—just die, Alton, my lad, and the tribe thinks itself well rid of them."

So that conversation ended. But it had implanted in

my bosom a new seed of mingled good and evil, which was destined to bear fruit, precious perhaps as well as bitter. God knows, it has hung on the tree long enough. Sour and harsh from the first, it has been many a year in ripening. But the sweetness of the apple, the potency of the grape, as the chemists tell us, are born out of acidity —a developed sourness. Will it be so with my thoughts? Dare I assert, as I sit writing here, with the wild waters slipping past the cabin windows, backwards and backwards ever, every plunge of the vessel one forward leap from the old world—worn-out world I had almost called it, of sham civilization and real penury—dare I hope ever to return and triumph? Shall I, after all, lay my bones among my own people, and hear the voices of freemen whisper in my dying ears?

Silence, dreaming heart! Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof—and the good thereof also. Would that I had known that before! Above all, that I had known it on that night, when first the burning thought arose in my heart, that I was unjustly used; that society had not given me my rights. It came to me as a revelation, celestial-infernal, full of glorious hopes of the possible future in store for me through the perfect development of all my faculties; and full, too, of fierce present rage, wounded vanity, bitter grudgings against those more favoured than myself, which grew in time almost to cursing against the God who had made me a poor untutored working man, and seemed to have given me genius only to keep me in a Tantalus' hell of unsatisfied thirst.

Ay, respectable gentlemen and ladies, I will confess all to you—you shall have, if you enjoy it, a fresh opportunity for indulging that supreme pleasure which the press daily affords you of insulting the classes whose powers most of you know as little as you do their sufferings. Yes; the Chartist poet is vain, conceited, ambitious, uneducated, shallow, inexperienced, envious, ferocious, scurrilous, seditious, traitorous. — Is your charitable vocabulary exhausted? Then ask yourselves, how often have you yourself honestly resisted and conquered the temptation

to any one of these sins, when it has come across you just once in a way, and not as they came to me, as they come to thousands of the working men, daily and hourly, "till their torments do, by length of time, become their elements"? What, are we covetous too? Yes! And if those who have, like you, still covet more, what wonder if those who have nothing covet something? Profligate too? Well, though that imputation as a generality is utterly calumnious, though your amount of respectable animal enjoyment per annum is a hundred times as great as that of the most self-indulgent artizan, yet, if you had ever felt what it is to want, not only every luxury of the senses, but even bread to eat, you would think more mercifully of the man who makes up by rare excesses, and those only of the limited kinds possible to him, for long intervals of dull privation, and says in his madness, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!" We have our sins, and you have yours. Ours may be the more gross and barbaric, but yours are none the less damnable; perhaps all the more so, for being the sleek, subtle, respectable, religious sins they are. You are frantic enough, if our part of the press calls you hard names, but you cannot see that your part of the press repays it back to us with interest. *We* see those insults, and feel them bitterly enough; and do not forget them, alas! soon enough, while they pass unheeded by your delicate eyes as trivial truisms. Horrible, unprincipled, villanous, seditious, frantic, blasphemous, are epithets, of course, when applied to—to how large a portion of the English people, you will some day discover to your astonishment. When will that come, and how? In thunder, and storm, and garments rolled in blood? Or like the dew on the mown grass, and the clear shining of the sunlight after April rain?

Yes, it was true. Society had not given me my rights. And woe unto the man on whom that idea, true or false, rises lurid, filling all his thoughts with stifling glare, as of the pit itself. Be it true, be it false, it is equally a woe to believe it; to have to live on a negation; to have to worship for our only idea, as hundreds of thousands of us have this day, the hatred of the things which are. Ay,

though one of us here and there may die in faith, in sight of the promised land, yet is it not hard, when looking from the top of Pisgah into "the good time coming," to watch the years slipping away one by one, and death crawling nearer and nearer, and the people wearying themselves in the fire for very vanity, and Jordan not yet passed, the promised land not yet entered? While our little children die around us, like lambs beneath the knife, of cholera and typhus and consumption, and all the diseases which the good time can and will prevent; which, as science has proved, and you the rich confess, might be prevented at once, if you dared to bring in one bold and comprehensive measure, and not sacrifice yearly the lives of thousands to the idol of vested interests, and a majority in the House. Is it not hard to men who smart beneath such things to help crying aloud—"Thou cursed Moloch-Mammon, take my life if thou wilt; let me die in the wilderness, for I have deserved it; but these little ones in mines and factories, in typhus-cellars, and Tooting pandemoniums, what have they done? If not in their fathers' cause, yet still in theirs, were it so great a sin to die upon a barricade?"

Or after all, my working brothers, is it true of our promised land, even as of that Jewish one of old, that the *priests'* feet must first cross the mystic stream into the good land and large which God has prepared for us?

Is it so indeed? Then in the name of the Lord of Hosts, ye priests of His, why will ye not awake, and arise, and go over Jordan, that the people of the Lord may follow you?

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CHAPTER V.

THE SCEPTIC'S MOTHER.

My readers will perceive from what I have detailed, that I was not likely to get any positive ground of comfort from Crossthwaite; and from within myself there was daily less and less hope of any. Daily the struggle became more intolerable between my duty to my mother and my duty to myself—that inward thirst for mental self-improvement, which, without any clear consciousness of its sanctity or inspiration, I felt, and could not help feeling, that I *must* follow. No doubt it was very self-willed and ambitious of me to do that which rich men's sons are flogged for not doing, and rewarded with all manner of prizes, scholarships, fellowships for doing. But the nineteenth year is a time of life at which self-will is apt to exhibit itself in other people besides tailors; and those religious persons who think it no sin to drive their sons on through classics and mathematics, in hopes of gaining them a station in life, ought not to be very hard upon me for driving myself on through the same path without any such selfish hope of gain—though perhaps the very fact of my having no wish or expectation of such advantage will constitute in their eyes my sin and folly, and prove that I was following the dictates merely of a carnal lust, and not of a proper worldly prudence. I really do not wish to be flippant or sneering. I have seen the evil of it as much as any man, in myself and in my own class. But there are excuses for such a fault in the working man. It does sour and madden him to be called presumptuous and

ambitious for the very same aspirations which are lauded up to the skies in the sons of the rich—unless, indeed, he will do one little thing, and so make his peace with society. If he will desert his own class; if he will try to become a sham gentleman, a parasite, and, if he can, a Mammonite, the world will compliment him on his noble desire to "*rise in life.*" He will have won his spurs, and be admitted into that exclusive pale of knighthood, beyond which it is a sin to carry arms even in self-defence. But if the working genius dares to be true to his own class—to stay among them—to regenerate them —to defend them—to devote his talents to those among whom God placed him and brought him up—then he is the demagogue, the incendiary, the fanatic, the dreamer. So you would have the monopoly of talent, too, exclusive worldlings? And yet you pretend to believe in the miracle of Pentecost, and the religion that was taught by the carpenter's Son, and preached across the world by fishermen!

I was several times minded to argue the question out with my mother, and assert for myself the same independence of soul which I was now earning for my body by my wages. Once I had resolved to speak to her that very evening; but, strangely enough, happening to open the Bible, which, alas! I did seldom at that time, my eye fell upon the chapter where Jesus, after having justified to His parents His absence in the Temple, while hearing the doctors and asking them questions, yet went down with them to Nazareth after all, and was subject unto them. The story struck me vividly as a symbol of my own duties. But on reading further, I found more than one passage which seemed to me to convey a directly opposite lesson, where His mother and His brethren, fancying Him mad, attempted to interfere with His labours, and asserting their family rights as reasons for retaining Him, met with a peremptory rebuff. I puzzled my head for some time to find out which of the two cases was the more applicable to my state of self-development. The notion of asking for teaching from on high on such a point had never crossed me. Indeed, if it had, I did not

believe sufficiently either in the story or in the doctrines connected with it, to have tried such a resource. And so, as may be supposed, my growing self-conceit decided for me that the latter course was the fitting one.

And yet I had not energy to carry it out. I was getting so worn out in body and mind from continual study and labour, stinted food and want of sleep, that I could not face the thought of an explosion, such as I knew must ensue, and I lingered on in the same unhappy state, becoming more and more morose in manner to my mother, while I was as assiduous as ever in all filial duties. But I had no pleasure in home. She seldom spoke to me. Indeed, there was no common topic about which we could speak. Besides, ever since that fatal Sunday evening, I saw that she suspected me and watched me. I had good reason to believe that she set spies upon my conduct. Poor dear mother! God forbid that I should accuse thee for a single care of thine, for a single suspicion even, prompted as they all were by a mother's anxious love. I would never have committed these things to paper, hadst thou not been far beyond the reach or hearing of them; and only now, in hopes that they may serve as a warning, in some degree to mothers, but ten times more to children. For I sinned against thee, deeply and shamefully, in thought and deed, while thou didst never sin against me; though all thy caution did but hasten the fatal explosion which came, and perhaps must have come, under some form or other, in any case.

I had been detained one night in the shop till late; and on my return my mother demanded, in a severe tone, the reason of my stay; and on my telling her, answered as severely that she did not believe me; that she had too much reason to suspect that I had been with bad companions.

"Who dared to put such a thought into your head?"

She "would not give up her authorities, but she had too much reason to believe them."

Again I demanded the name of my slanderer, and was refused it. And then I burst out, for the first time in my life, into a real fit of rage with her. I cannot tell how I

dared to say what I did, but I was weak, nervous, irritable—my brain excited beyond all natural tension. Above all, I felt that she was unjust to me; and my good conscience, as well as my pride, rebelled.

"You have never trusted me," I cried, "you have watched me——"

"Did you not deceive me once already?"

"And if I did," I answered, more and more excited, "have I not slaved for you, stinted myself of clothes to pay your rent? Have I not run to and fro for you like a slave, while I knew all the time you did not respect me or trust me? If you had only treated me as a child and an idiot, I could have borne it. But you have been thinking of me all the while as an incarnate fiend—dead in trespasses and sins—a child of wrath and the devil. What right have you to be astonished if I should do my father's works?"

"You may be ignorant of vital religion," she answered; "and you may insult me. But if you make a mock of God's Word, you leave my house. If you can laugh at religion, you can deceive me."

The pent-up scepticism of years burst forth.

"Mother," I said, "don't talk to me about religion, and election, and conversion, and all that—I don't believe one word of it. Nobody does, except good kind people—(like you, alas! I was going to say, but the devil stopped the words at my lips)—who must needs have some reason to account for their goodness. That Bowyer—he's a soft heart by nature, and as he is, so he does—religion has had nothing to do with that, any more than it has with that black-faced, canting scoundrel who has been telling you lies about me. Much his heart is changed. He carries sneak and slanderer written in his face—and sneak and slanderer he will be, elect or none. Religion? Nobody believes in it. The rich don't; or they wouldn't fill their churches up with pews, and shut the poor out, all the time they are calling them brothers. They believe the gospel? Then why do they leave the men who make their clothes to starve in such hells on earth as our work-room? No more do the tradespeople believe in it; or

they wouldn't go home from sermon to sand the sugar, and put sloe-leaves in the tea, and send out lying puffs of their vamped-up goods, and grind the last farthing out of the poor creatures who rent their wretched stinking houses. And as for the workmen—they laugh at it all, I can tell you. Much good religion is doing for them! You may see it's fit only for women and children—for go where you will, church or chapel, you see hardly anything but bonnets and babies! I don't believe a word of it,—once and for all. I'm old enough to think for myself, and a free-thinker I will be, and believe nothing but what I know and understand."

I had hardly spoken the words, when I would have given worlds to recall them—but it was to be—and it was.

Sternly she looked at me full in the face, till my eyes dropped before her gaze. Then she spoke steadily and slowly:

"Leave this house this moment. You are no son of mine henceforward. Do you think I will have my daughter polluted by the company of an infidel and a blasphemer?"

"I will go," I answered fiercely; "I can get my own living at all events!" And before I had time to think, I had rushed upstairs, packed up my bundle, not forgetting the precious books, and was on my way through the frosty, echoing streets, under the cold glare of the winter's moon.

I had gone perhaps half a mile, when the thought of home rushed over me—the little room where I had spent my life—the scene of all my childish joys and sorrows—which I should never see again, for I felt that my departure was for ever. Then I longed to see my mother once again—not to speak to her—for I was at once too proud and too cowardly to do that—but to have a look at her through the window. One look—for all the while, though I was boiling over with rage and indignation, I felt that it was all on the surface—that in the depths of our hearts I loved her and she loved me. And yet I wished to be angry, wished to hate her. Strange contradiction of the flesh and spirit!

Hastily and silently I retraced my steps to the house. The gate was padlocked. I cautiously stole over the palings to the window—the shutter was closed and fast. I longed to knock—I lifted my hand to the door, and dare not: indeed, I knew that it was useless, in my dread of my mother's habit of stern determination. That room—that mother I never saw again. I turned away; sickened at heart, I was clambering back again, looking behind me towards the window, when I felt a strong grip on my collar, and turning round, had a policeman's lantern flashed in my face.

"Hullo, young'un, and what do you want here?" with a strong emphasis, after the fashion of policemen, on all his pronouns.

"Hush! or you'll alarm my mother!"

"Oh! eh! Forgot the latch-key, you sucking Don Juan, that's it, is it? Late home from the Victory?"

I told him simply how the case stood, and entreated him to get me a night's lodging, assuring him that my mother would not admit me, or I ask to be admitted.

The policeman seemed puzzled, but after scratching his hat in lieu of his head for some seconds, replied,

"This here is the dodge—you goes outside and lies down on the kerb-stone; whereby I spies you a-sleeping in the streets, contrary to Act o' Parliament; whereby it is my duty to take you to the station-house; whereby you gets a night's lodging free gracious for nothing, and company perwided by her Majesty."

"Oh, not to the station-house!" I cried in shame and terror.

"Werry well; then you must keep moving all night continually, whereby you avoids the hact; or else you goes to a twopenny-rope shop and gets a lie down. And your bundle you'd best leave at my house. Twopenny-rope society a'n't particular. I'm going off my beat; you walk home with me and leave your traps. Everybody knows me—Costello, V 21, that's my number."

So on I went with the kind-hearted man, who preached solemnly to me all the way on the fifth commandment. But I heard very little of it; for before I had proceeded

a quarter of a mile, a deadly faintness and dizziness came over me, I staggered, and fell against the railings.

"And have you been drinking arter all?"

"I never——a drop in my life——nothing but bread-and-water this fortnight."

And it was true. I had been paying for my own food, and had stinted myself to such an extent, that between starvation, want of sleep, and over-exertion, I was worn to a shadow, and the last drop had filled the cup; the evening's scene and its consequences had been too much for me, and in the middle of an attempt to explain matters to the policeman, I dropped on the pavement, bruising my face heavily.

He picked me up, put me under one arm and my bundle under the other, and was proceeding on his march, when three men came rollicking up.

"Hullo, Polcax—Costello—What's that? Work for us? A demp unpleasant body?"

"Oh, Mr. Bromley, sir! Hope you're well, sir! Werry rum go this here, sir! I finds this cove in the streets. He says his mother turned him out o' doors. He seems very fair spoken, and very bad in he's head, and very bad in he's chest, and very bad in he's legs, he does. And I can't come to no conclusions respecting my conduct in this here case, nohow!"

"Memorialize the Health of Towns Commission," suggested one.

"Bleed him in the great toe," said the second.

"Put a blister on the back of his left eye-ball," said a third.

"Case of male asterisks," observed the first. "Rj. Aquæ pumpis puræ quantum suff. Applicatur exterò pro re natâ. J. Bromley, M.D., and don't he wish he may get through!"

"Tip us your daddle, my boy," said the second speaker. "I'll tell you what, Bromley, this fellow's very bad. He's got no more pulse than the Pimlico sewer. Run in into the next pot'us. Here—you lay hold of him, Bromley—that last round with the cabman nearly put my humerus out."

The huge, burly, pea-jacketed medical student—for such I saw at once he was—laid hold of me on the right

tenderly enough, and walked me off between him and the policeman.

I fell again into a faintness, from which I was awakened by being shoved through the folding-doors of a gin-shop, into a glare of light and hubbub of blackguardism, and placed on a settle, while my conductor called out—

"Pots round, Mary, and a go of brandy hot with, for the patient. Here, young'un, toss it off, it'll make your hair grow."

I feebly answered that I never had drunk anything stronger than water.

"High time to begin, then; no wonder you're so ill. Well, if you won't, I'll make you——"

And taking my head under his arm, he seized me by the nose, while another poured the liquor down my throat—and certainly it revived me at once.

A drunken drab pulled another drunken drab off the settle to make room for the "poor young man"; and I sat there with a confused notion that something strange and dreadful had happened to me, while the party drained their respective quarts of porter, and talked over the last boat-race with the Leander.

"Now then, gen'l'men," said the policeman, 'if you think he's recovered, we'll take him home to his mother; she ought for to take him in, surely."

"Yes, if she has as much heart in her as a dried walnut."

But I resisted stoutly; though I longed to vindicate my mother's affection, yet I could not face her. I entreated to be taken to the station-house; threatened, in my desperation, to break the bar glasses, which, like Doll Tearsheet's abuse, only elicited from the policeman a solemn "Very well"; and under the unwonted excitement of the brandy, struggled so fiercely, and talked so incoherently, that the medical students interfered.

"We shall have this fellow in phrenitis, or laryngitis, or dothenenteritis, or some other itis, before long, if he's aggravated."

"And whichever it is, it'll kill him. He has no more stamina left than a yard of pump water."

"I should consider him chargeable to the parish," suggested the bar-keeper.

"Exactually so, my Solomon of licensed victuallers. Get a workhouse order for him, Costello."

"And I should consider, also, sir," said the licensed victualler, with increased importance, "having been a guardian myself, and knowing the hact, as the parish couldn't refuse, because they're in power to recover all hexpenses out of his mother."

"To be sure; it's all the unnatural old witch's fault."

"No, it is not," said I, faintly.

"Wait till your opinion's asked, young'un. Go kick up the authorities, policeman."

"Now, I'll just tell you how that'll work, gemmen," answered the policeman, solemnly. "I goes to the overseer—werry good sort o' man—but he's in bed. I knocks for half an hour. He puts his nightcap out o' windy, and sends me to the relieving-officer. Werry good sort o' man he too; but he's in bed. I knocks for another half-hour. He puts his nightcap out o' windy—sends me to the medical officer for a certificate. Medical officer's gone to a midwifery case. I hunts him for an hour or so. He's got hold of a babby with three heads, or summat else; and two more women a-calling out for him like blazes. 'He'll come to-morrow morning.' Now, I just axes your opinion of that there most procrastinationest go."

The big student, having cursed the parochial authorities in general, offered to pay for my night's lodging at the public-house. The good man of the house demurred at first, but relented on being reminded of the value of a medical student's custom: whereon, without more ado, two of the rough diamonds took me between them, carried me upstairs, undressed me, and put me to bed, as tenderly as if they had been women.

"He'll have the tantrums before morning, I'm afraid," said one.

"Very likely to turn to typhus," said the other.

"Well, I suppose—it's a horrid bore, but

> What must be must; man is but dust,
> If you can't get crumb, you must just eat crust.

Send me up a go of hot with, and I'll sit up with him till he's asleep, dead, or better."

"Well, then, I'll stay too; we may just as well make a night of it here as well as anywhere else."

And he pulled a short black pipe out of his pocket, and sat down to meditate with his feet on the hobs of the empty grate; the other man went down for the liquor; while I, between the brandy and exhaustion, fell fast asleep, and never stirred till I woke the next morning with a racking headache, and saw the big student standing by my bedside, having, as I afterwards heard, sat by me till four in the morning.

"Hallo, young'un, come to your senses? Headache, eh? Slightly comato-crapulose? We'll give you some soda and salvolatile, and I'll pay for your breakfast."

And so he did, and when he was joined by his companions on their way to St. George's, they were very anxious, having heard my story, to force a few shillings on me "for luck," which, I need not say, I peremptorily refused, assuring them that I could and would get my own living, and never take a farthing from any man.

"That's a plucky dog, though he's a tailor," I heard them say, as, after overwhelming them with thanks, and vowing, amid shouts of laughter, to repay them every farthing I had cost them, I took my way, sick and stunned, towards my dear old Sandy Mackaye's street.

Rough diamonds indeed! I have never met you again, but I have not forgotten you. Your early life may be a coarse, too often a profligate one—but you know the people, and the people know you: and your tenderness and care, bestowed without hope of repayment, cheers daily many a poor soul in hospital wards and fever-cellars —to meet its reward some day at the people's hands. You belong to us at heart, as the Paris barricades can tell. Alas! for the society which stifles in after-life too many of your better feelings, by making you mere flunkeys and parasites, dependent for your livelihood on the caprices and luxuries of the rich.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE DULWICH GALLERY.

SANDY MACKAYE received me in a characteristic way—growled at me for half an hour for quarrelling with my mother, and when I was at my wit's end, suddenly offered me a bed in his house and the use of his little sitting-room—and, bliss too great to hope! of his books also; and when I talked of payment, told me to hold my tongue and mind my own business. So I settled myself at once; and that very evening he installed himself as my private tutor, took down a Latin book, and set me to work on it.

"An' mind ye, laddie," said he, half in jest and half in earnest, "gin I find ye playing truant, and reading a' sorts o' nonsense instead of minding the scholastic methods and proprieties, I'll just bring ye in a bill at the year's end o' twa guineas a week for lodgings and tuition, and tak' the law o' ye; so mind and read what I tell ye. Do you comprehend noo?"

I did comprehend, and obeyed him, determining to repay him some day—and somehow—how I did not very clearly see. Thus I put myself more or less into the old man's power; foolishly enough the wise world will say. But I had no suspicion in my character; and I could not look at those keen grey eyes, when, after staring into vacancy during some long preachment, they suddenly flashed round at me, and through me, full of fun and quaint thought, and kindly earnestness, and fancy that man less honest than his face seemed to proclaim him.

By-the-by, I have as yet given no description of the

old eccentric's abode — an unpardonable omission, I suppose, in these days of Dutch painting and Boz. But the omission was correct, both historically and artistically, for I had as yet only gone to him for books, books, nothing but books; and I had been blind to everything in his shop but that fairy-land of shelves, filled, in my simple fancy, with inexhaustible treasures, wonder-working, omnipotent, as the magic seal of Solomon.

It was not till I had been settled and at work for several nights in his sanctum, behind the shop, that I began to become conscious what a strange den that sanctum was.

It was so dark, that without a gaslight no one but he could see to read there, except on very sunny days. Not only were the shelves which covered every inch of wall crammed with books and pamphlets, but the little window was blocked up with them, the floor was piled with bundles of them, in some places three feet deep, apparently in the wildest confusion—though there was some mysterious order in them which he understood, and symbolized, I suppose, by the various strange and ludicrous nicknames on their tickets—for he never was at fault a moment if a customer asked for a book, though it were buried deep in the chaotic stratum. Out of this book alluvium a hole seemed to have been dug near the fire-place, just big enough to hold his arm-chair and a table, both strewn like everything else, and garnished with odds and ends of MSS., and a snuffer-tray containing scraps of half-smoked tobacco, "pipe-dottles," as he called them, which were carefully resmoked over and over again, till nothing but ash was left. His whole culinary utensils—for he cooked as well as eat in this strange hole—were an old rusty kettle, which stood on one hob, and a blue plate which, when washed, stood on the other. A barrel of true Aberdeen meal peered out of a corner, half buried in books, and a "keg o' whusky, the gift o' freens," peeped in like case out of another.

This was his only food. "It was a' poison," he used to say, "in London. Bread full o' alum and bones, and sic filth—meat over-driven till it was a' braxy—water

sopped wi' dead men's juice. Naething was safe but gude Scots parrich and Athol brose." He carried his water-horror so far as to walk some quarter of a mile every morning to fill his kettle at a favourite pump. "Was he a cannibal, to drink out o' that pump hard-by, right under the kirkyard?" But it was little he either ate or drank—he seemed to live upon tobacco. From four in the morning till twelve at night, the pipe never left his lips, except when he went into the outer shop. "It promoted meditation, and drove awa' the lusts o' the flesh. Eeh! it was worthy o' that auld tyrant, Jamie, to write his counter-blast to the poor man's freen! The hypocrite! to gang preaching the virtues o' evil-savoured smoke 'ad dæmones abigendos,—and then rail again tobacco, as if it was no as gude for the purpose as auld rags and horn shavings!"

Sandy Mackaye had a great fancy for political caricatures, rows of which, there being no room for them on the walls, hung on strings from the ceiling—like clothes hung out to dry—and among them dangled various books to which he had taken an antipathy, principally High Tory and Benthamite, crucified, impaled through their covers, and suspended in all sorts of torturing attitudes. Among them, right over the table, figured a copy of Icon Basilike dressed up in a paper shirt, all drawn over with figures of flames and devils, and surmounted by a peaked paper cap, like a victim at an *auto-da-fé*. And in the midst of all this chaos grinned from the chimney-piece, among pipes and pens, pinches of salt and scraps of butter, a tall cast of Michael Angelo's well-known skinless model—his pristine white defaced by a cap of soot upon the top of his scalpless skull, and every muscle and tendon thrown into horrible relief by the dirt which had lodged among the cracks. There it stood, pointing with its ghastly arm towards the door, and holding on its wrist a label with the following inscription:—

> Here stand I, the working man,
> Get more off me if you can.

I questioned Mackaye one evening about those hanged

and crucified books, and asked him if he ever sold any of them.

"Ou, ay," he said; "if folks are fools enough to ask for them, I'll just answer a fool according to his folly."

"But," I said, "Mr. Mackaye, do you think it right to sell books of the very opinions of which you disapprove so much?"

"Hoot, laddie, it's just a spoiling o' the Egyptians; so mind yer book, and dinna tak in hand cases o' conscience for ither folk. Ye'll ha' wark eneugh wi' yer ain before ye're dune."

And he folded round his knees his Joseph's coat, as he called it, an old dressing-gown with one plaid sleeve, and one blue one, red shawl-skirts, and a black broadcloth back, not to mention innumerable patches of every imaginable stuff and colour, filled his pipe, and buried his nose in "Harrington's Oceana." He read at least twelve hours every day of his life, and that exclusively old history and politics, though his favourite books were Thomas Carlyle's works. Two or three evenings in the week, when he had seen me safe settled at my studies, he used to disappear mysteriously for several hours, and it was some time before I found out, by a chance expression, that he was attending some meeting or committee of working-men. I begged him to take me there with him. But I was stopped by a laconic answer—

"When ye're ready."

"And when shall I be ready, Mr. Mackaye?"

"Read yer book till I tell ye."

And he twisted himself into his best coat, which had once been black, squeezed on his little Scotch cap, and went out.

* * * * *

I now found myself, as the reader may suppose, in an element far more congenial to my literary tastes, and which compelled far less privation of sleep and food in order to find time and means for reading; and my health began to mend from the very first day. But the thought of my mother haunted me; and Mackaye seemed in no hurry to let me escape from it, for he insisted on my

writing to her in a penitent strain, informing her of my whereabouts, and offering to return home if she should wish it. With feelings strangely mingled between the desire of seeing her again and the dread of returning to the old drudgery of surveillance, I sent the letter, and waited the whole week without any answer. At last, one evening, when I returned from work, Sandy seemed in a state of unusual exhilaration. He looked at me again and again, winking and chuckling to himself in a way which showed me that his good spirits had something to do with my concerns: but he did not open on the subject till I had settled to my evening's reading. Then, having brewed himself an unusually strong mug of whisky-toddy, and brought out with great ceremony a clean pipe, he commenced.

"Alton, laddie, I've been fiechting Philistines for ye the day."

"Ah! have you heard from my mother?"

"I wadna say that exactly; but there's been a gran bailie body wi' me that calls himsel your uncle, and a braw young callant, a bairn o' his, I'm thinking."

"Ah! that's my cousin George; and tell me—do tell me, what you said to them."

"Ou—that'll be mair concern o' mine than o' yourn. But ye're no going back to your mither."

My heart leapt up with—joy; there is no denying it—and then I burst into tears.

"And she won't see me? Has she really cast me off?"

"Why, that'll be verra much as ye prosper, I'm thinking. Ye're an unaccreedited hero, the noo, as Thomas Carlyle has it. 'But gin ye do weel by yoursel,' saith the Psalmist, 'ye'll find a' men speak well o' ye'—if ye gang their gate. But ye're to gang to see your uncle at his shop o' Monday next, at one o'clock. Now stint your greeting, and read awa'."

On the next Monday I took a holiday, the first in which I had ever indulged myself; and having spent a good hour in scrubbing away at my best shoes and Sunday suit, started, in fear and trembling, for my uncle's "establishment."

I was agreeably surprised, on being shown into the little back office at the back of the shop, to meet with a tolerably gracious reception from the good-natured Mammonite. He did not shake hands with me, it is true; —was I not a poor relation? But he told me to sit down, commended me for the excellent character which he had of me both from my master and Mackaye, and then entered on the subject of my literary tastes. He heard I was a precious clever fellow. No wonder, I came of a clever stock; his poor dear brother had plenty of brains for everything but business. "And you see, my boy" (with a glance at the big ledgers and busy shop without), "I knew a thing or two in my time, or I should not have been here. But without capital, *I* think brains a curse. Still we must make the best of a bad matter; and if you are inclined to help to raise the family name—not that I think much of book writers myself—poor starving devils, half of them—but still people do talk about them—and a man might get a snug thing as newspaper editor, with interest; or clerk to something or other—always some new company in the wind now—and I should have no objection, if you seemed likely to do us credit, to speak a word for you. I've none of your mother's confounded puritanical notions, I can tell you; and, what's more, I have, thank Heaven, as fine a city connexion as any man. But you must mind and make yourself a good accountant—learn double entry on the Italian method—that's a good practical study; and if that old Sawney is soft enough to teach you other things gratis, he may as well teach you that too. I'll bet he knows something about it—the old Scotch fox. There now—that'll do—there's five shillings for you—mind you don't lose them—and if I hear a good account of you, why, perhaps—but there's no use making promises."

At this moment a tall handsome young man, whom I did not at first recognize as my cousin George, swung into the office, and shook me cordially by the hand.

"Hullo, Alton, how are you? Why, I hear you're coming out as a regular genius—breaking out in a new

place, upon my honour! Have you done with him, governor?"

"Well, I think I have. I wish you'd have a talk with him, my boy. I'm sorry I can't see more of him, but I have to meet a party on business at the West-end at two, and Alderman Tumbril and family dine with us this evening, don't they? I think our small table will be full."

"Of course it will. Come along with me, and we'll have a chat in some quiet out-of-the-way place. This city is really so noisy that you can't hear your own ears, as our dean says in lecture."

So he carried me off, down back streets and alleys, a little puzzled at the extreme cordiality of his manner. Perhaps it sprung, as I learned afterward to suspect, from his consistent and perpetual habit of ingratiating himself with every one whom he approached. He never cut a chimney-sweep if he knew him. And he found it pay. The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

Perhaps it sprung also, as I began to suspect in the first hundred yards of our walk, from the desire of showing off before me the university clothes, manners, and gossip, which he had just brought back with him from Cambridge.

I had not seen him more than three or four times in my life before, and then he appeared to me merely a tall, handsome, conceited, slangy boy. But I now found him much improved—in all externals at least. He had made it his business, I knew, to perfect himself in all athletic pursuits which were open to a Londoner. As he told me that day—he found it pay, when one got among gentlemen. Thus he had gone up to Cambridge a capital skater, rower, pugilist—and billiard player. Whether or not that last accomplishment ought to be classed in the list of athletic sports, he contrived, by his own account, to keep it in that of paying ones. In both these branches he seemed to have had plenty of opportunities of distinguishing himself at college; and his tall, powerful figure showed the fruit of these exercises in a stately and

confident, almost martial, carriage. Something jaunty, perhaps swaggering, remained still in his air and dress, which yet sat not ungracefully on him; but I could see that he had been mixing in society more polished and artificial than that to which we had either of us been accustomed, and in his smart Rochester, well-cut trousers, and delicate French boots, he excited, I will not deny it, my boyish admiration and envy.

"Well," he said, as soon as we were out of the shop, "which way? Got a holiday? And how did you intend to spend it?"

"I wanted very much," I said, meekly, "to see the pictures at the National Gallery."

"Oh! ah! pictures don't pay; but, if you like—much better ones at Dulwich—that's the place to go to—you can see the others any day—and at Dulwich, you know, they've got—why let me see—" And he ran over half-a-dozen outlandish names of painters, which, as I have never again met with them, I am inclined on the whole to consider as somewhat extemporaneous creations. However, I agreed to go.

"Ah! capital—very nice quiet walk, and convenient for me—very little out of my way home. I'll walk there with you."

"One word for your neighbour and two for yourself," thought I; but on we walked. To see good pictures had been a long cherished hope of mine. Everything beautiful in form or colour was beginning of late to have an intense fascination for me. I had, now that I was emancipated, gradually dared to feed my greedy eyes by passing stares into the print-shop windows, and had learnt from them a thousand new notions, new emotions, new longings after beauties of Nature, which seemed destined never to be satisfied. But pictures, above all, foreign ones, had been in my mother's eyes, Anathema Maranatha, as vile Popish and Pagan vanities, the rags of the scarlet woman no less than the surplice itself—and now, when it came to the point, I hesitated at an act of such awful disobedience, even though unknown to her. My cousin, however, laughed down my scruples, told me I was out of leading-

strings now, and, which was true enough, that it was "a * * * * deal better to amuse oneself in picture galleries without leave, than live a life of sneaking and lying under petticoat government, as all home-birds were sure to do in the long-run." And so I went on, while my cousin kept up a running fire of chat the whole way, intermixing shrewd, bold observations upon every woman who passed, with sneers at the fellows of the college to which we were going—their idleness and luxury—the large grammar-school which they were bound by their charter to keep up, and did not—and hints about private interest in high quarters, through which their wealthy uselessness had been politely overlooked, when all similar institutions in the kingdom were subject to the searching examination of a government commission. Then there were stories of boat-races and gay noblemen, breakfast parties, and lectures on Greek plays flavoured with a spice of Cambridge slang, all equally new to me—glimpses into a world of wonders, which made me feel, as I shambled along at his side, trying to keep step with his strides, more weakly and awkward and ignorant than ever.

We entered the gallery. I was in a fever of expectation.

The rich sombre light of the rooms, the rich heavy warmth of the stove-heated air, the brilliant and varied colouring and gilded frames which embroidered the walls, the hushed earnestness of a few artists, who were copying, and the few visitors who were lounging from picture to picture, struck me at once with mysterious awe. But my attention was in a moment concentrated on one figure opposite to me at the furthest end. I hurried straight towards it. When I had got half-way up the gallery I looked round for my cousin. He had turned aside to some picture of a Venus which caught my eye also, but which, I remember now, only raised in me then a shudder and a blush, and a fancy that the clergymen must be really as bad as my mother had taught me to believe, if they could allow in their galleries pictures of undressed women. I have learnt to view such things differently now, thank God. I have learnt that to the pure all things are pure.

I have learnt the meaning of that great saying—the foundation of all art, as well as all modesty, all love, which tells us how "the man and his wife were both naked, and not ashamed." But this book is the history of my mental growth; and my mistakes as well as my discoveries are steps in that development, and may bear a lesson in them.

How I have rambled! But as that day was the turning-point of my whole short life, I may be excused for lingering upon every feature of it.

Timidly, but eagerly, I went up to the picture, and stood entranced before it. It was Guido's St. Sebastian. All the world knows the picture, and all the world knows, too, the defects of the master, though in this instance he seems to have risen above himself, by a sudden inspiration, into that true naturalness, which is the highest expression of the Spiritual. But the very defects of the picture, its exaggeration, its theatricality, were especially calculated to catch the eye of a boy awaking out of the narrow dulness of Puritanism. The breadth and vastness of light and shade upon those manly limbs, so grand and yet so delicate, standing out against the background of lurid night, the helplessness of the bound arms, the arrow quivering in the shrinking side, the upturned brow, the eyes in whose dark depths enthusiastic faith seemed conquering agony and shame, the parted lips, which seemed to ask, like those martyrs in the Revelations, reproachful, half-resigned, "O Lord, how long?"——Gazing at that picture since, I have understood how the idolatry of painted saints could arise in the minds even of the most educated, who were not disciplined by that stern regard for fact which is—or ought to be—the strength of Englishmen. I have understood the heart of that Italian girl, whom some such picture of St. Sebastian, perhaps this very one, excited, as the Venus of Praxiteles the Grecian boy, to hopeless love, madness, and death. Then I had never heard of St. Sebastian. I did not dream of any connexion between that, or indeed any picture, and Christianity; and yet, as I stood before it, I seemed to be face to face with the

ghosts of my old Puritan forefathers, to see the spirit which supported them on pillories and scaffolds—the spirit of that true St. Margaret, the Scottish maiden whom Claverhouse and his soldiers chained to a post on the sea-sands to die by inches in the rising tide, till the sound of her hymns was slowly drowned in the dash of the hungry leaping waves. My heart swelled within me, my eyes seemed bursting from my head with the intensity of my gaze, and great tears, I knew not why, rolled slowly down my face.

A woman's voice close to me, gentle yet of deeper tone than most, woke me from my trance.

"You seem to be deeply interested in that picture?"

I looked round, yet not at the speaker. My eyes before they could meet hers, were caught by an apparition the most beautiful I had ever yet beheld. And what—what—have I seen equal to her since? Strange, that I should love to talk of her. Strange, that I fret at myself now because I cannot set down on paper line by line, and hue by hue, that wonderful loveliness of which ——. But no matter. Had I but such an imagination as Petrarch, or rather, perhaps, had I his deliberate cold self-consciousness, what volumes of similes and conceits I might pour out, connecting that peerless face and figure with all lovely things which heaven and earth contain. As it is, because I cannot say all, I will say nothing, but repeat to the end again and again, Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beyond all statue, picture, or poet's dream. Seventeen—slight but rounded, a masque and features delicate and regular, as if fresh from the chisel of Praxiteles—I must try to describe after all, you see—a skin of alabaster (privet-flowers, Horace and Ariosto would have said, more true to Nature), stained with the faintest flush; auburn hair, with that peculiar crisped wave seen in the old Italian pictures, and the warm, dark hazel eyes which so often accompany it; lips like a thread of vermillion, somewhat too thin, perhaps—but I thought little of that then; with such perfect finish and grace in every line and hue of her features and her dress, down to the little fingers and nails, which showed through her

thin gloves, that she seemed to my fancy fresh from the innermost chamber of some enchanted palace, "where no air of heaven could visit her cheek too roughly." I dropped my eyes quite dazzled. The question was repeated by a lady who stood with her, whose face I remarked then—as I did to the last, alas!—too little; dazzled at the first by outward beauty, perhaps because so utterly unaccustomed to it.

"It is indeed a wonderful picture," I said, timidly. "May I ask what is the subject of it?"

"Oh! don't you know?" said the young beauty, with a smile that thrilled through me. "It is St. Sebastian."

"I—I am very much ashamed," I answered, colouring up, "but I do not know who St. Sebastian was. Was he a Popish saint?"

A tall, stately old man, who stood with the two ladies, laughed kindly. "No, not till they made him one against his will; and at the same time, by putting him into the mill which grinds old folks young again, converted him from a grizzled old Roman tribune into the young Apollo of Popery."

"You will puzzle your hearer, my dear uncle," said the same deep-toned woman's voice which had first spoken to me. "As you volunteered the saint's name, Lillian, you shall also tell his history."

Simply and shortly, with just feeling enough to send through me a fresh thrill of delighted interest, without trenching the least on the most stately reserve, she told me the well known history of the saint's martyrdom.

If I seem minute in my description, let those who read my story remember that such courteous dignity, however natural, I am bound to believe, it is to them, was to me an utterly new excellence in human nature. All my mother's Spartan nobleness of manner seemed unexpectedly combined with all my little sister's careless ease.

"What a beautiful poem the story would make!" said I, as soon as I recovered my thoughts.

"Well spoken, young man," answered the old gentleman. "Let us hope that your seeing a subject for a good poem will be the first step towards your writing one."

As he spoke, he bent on me two clear grey eyes, full of kindliness, mingled with practised discernment. I saw that he was evidently a clergyman; but what his tight silk stockings and peculiar hat denoted I did not know. There was about him the air of a man accustomed equally to thought, to men, and to power. And I remarked somewhat maliciously, that my cousin, who had strutted up towards us on seeing me talking to two ladies, the instant he caught sight of those black silk stockings and that strange hat, fell suddenly in countenance, and sidling off somewhat meekly into the background, became absorbed in the examination of a Holy Family.

I answered something humbly, I forget what, which led to a conversation. They questioned me as to my name, my mother, my business, my studies; while I revelled in the delight of stolen glances at my new-found Venus Victrix, who was as forward as any of them in her questions and her interest. Perhaps she enjoyed, at least she could not help seeing, the admiration for herself which I took no pains to conceal. At last the old man cut the conversation short by a quiet "Good morning, sir," which astonished me. I had never heard words whose tone was so courteous and yet so chillingly peremptory. As they turned away, he repeated to himself once or twice, as if to fix them in his mind, my name and my master's, and awoke in me, perhaps too thoughtlessly, a tumult of vain hopes. Once and again the beauty and her companion looked back towards me, and seemed talking of me, and my face was burning scarlet, when my cousin swung up in his hard, off-hand way.

"By Jove, Alton, my boy! you're a knowing fellow. I congratulate you! At your years, indeed! to rise a dean and two beauties at the first throw, and hook them fast!"

"A dean!" I said, in some trepidation.

"Ay, a live dean—didn't you see the cloven foot sticking out from under his shoe-buckle? What news for your mother! What will the ghosts of your grandfathers to the seventh generation say to this, Alton? Colloquing in Pagan picture galleries with shovel-hatted Philistines! And that's not the worst, Alton,"

he ran on. "Those daughters of Moab—those daughters of Moab——."

"Hold your tongue," I said, almost crying with vexation.

"Look there, if you want to save your good temper. There, she is looking back again—not at poor me, though. What a lovely girl she is!—and a real lady—*l'air noble*—the rael genuine grit, as Sam Slick says, and no mistake. By Jove, what a face! what hands! what feet! what a figure—in spite of crinolines and all abominations! And didn't she know it? And didn't she know that you knew it too?" And he ran on descanting coarsely on beauties which I dared not even have profaned by naming, in a way that made me, I knew not why, mad with jealousy and indignation. She seemed mine alone in all the world. What right had any other human being, above all, he, to dare to mention her? I turned again to my St. Sebastian. That movement only brought on me a fresh volley of banter.

"Oh, that's the dodge, is it, to catch intellectual fine ladies?—to fall into an ecstatic attitude before a picture—But then we must have Alton's genius, you know, to find out which the fine pictures are. I must read up that subject, by-the-by. It might be a paying one among the dons. For the present, here goes in for an attitude. Will this do, Alton?" And he arranged himself admirably before the picture in an attitude so absurd and yet so graceful, that I did not know whether to laugh at him or hate him.

"At all events," he added, dryly, "it will be as good as playing the Evangelical at Carus's tea-parties, or taking the sacrament regularly for fear one's testimonials should be refused." And then he looked at me, and through me, in his intense, confident way, to see that his hasty words had not injured him with me. He used to meet one's eye as boldly as any man I ever saw; but it was not the simple gaze of honesty and innocence, but an imperious, searching look, as if defying scrutiny. His was a true mesmeric eye, if ever there was one. No wonder it worked the miracles it did.

"Come along," he said, suddenly seizing my arm. "Don't you see they're leaving? Out of the gallery after them, and get a good look at the carriage and the arms upon it. I saw one standing there as we came in. It may pay us—you, that is—to know it again."

We went out, I holding him back, I knew not why, and arrived at the outer gate just in time to see them enter the carriage and drive off. I gazed to the last, but did not stir.

"Good boy," he said, "knowing still. If you had bowed, or showed the least sign of recognition, you would have broken the spell."

But I hardly heard what he said, and stood gazing stupidly after the carriage as it disappeared. I did not know then what had happened to me. I know now, alas! too well.

CHAPTER VII.

FIRST LOVE.

TRULY I said, I did not know what had happened to me. I did not attempt to analyse the intense, overpowering instinct which from that moment made the lovely vision I had seen the lodestar of all my thoughts. Even now, I can see nothing in those feelings of mine but simple admiration—idolatry, if you will—of physical beauty. Doubtless there was more—doubtless—I had seen pretty faces before, and knew that they were pretty, but they had passed from my retina, like the prints of beauties which I saw in the shop windows, without exciting a thought—even a conscious emotion of complacency. But this face did not pass away. Day and night I saw it, just as I had seen it in the gallery. The same playful smile —the same glance alternately turned to me, and the glowing picture above her head—and that was all I saw or felt. No child ever nestled upon its mother's shoulder with feelings more celestially pure, than those with which I counted over day and night each separate lineament of that exceeding loveliness. Romantic? extravagant? Yes; if the world be right in calling a passion romantic just in proportion as it is not merely hopeless, but pure and unselfish, drawing its delicious power from no hope or faintest desire of enjoyment, but merely from simple delight in its object—then my passion was most romantic. I never thought of disparity in rank. Why should I? That could not blind the eyes of my imagination. She was beautiful, and that was all, and all in all to me; and had our stations been exchanged, and more than ex-

changed; had I been King Cophetua, or she the beggar-maid, I should have gloried in her just as much.

Beloved sleepless hours, which I spent in picturing that scene to myself, with all the brilliance of fresh recollection! Beloved hours! how soon you pass away! Soon—soon my imagination began to fade; the traces of her features on my mind's eye became confused and dim; and then came over me the fierce desire to see her again, that I might renew the freshness of that charming image. Thereon grew up an agony of longing—an agony of weeks, and months, and years. Where could I find that face again? was my ruling thought from morning till eve. I knew that it was hopeless to look for her at the gallery where I had first seen her. My only hope was, that at some place of public resort at the West End I might catch, if but for a moment, an inspiring glance of that radiant countenance. I lingered round the Burton Arch and Hyde Park Gate—but in vain. I peered into every carriage, every bonnet that passed me in the thoroughfares—in vain. I stood patiently at the doors of exhibitions and concerts, and playhouses, to be shoved back by policemen, and insulted by footmen—but in vain. Then I tried the fashionable churches, one by one; and sat in the free seats, to listen to prayers and sermons, not a word of which, alas! I cared to understand, with my eyes searching carefully every pew and gallery, face by face; always fancying, in self-torturing waywardness, that she might be just in the part of the gallery which I could not see. Oh! miserable days of hope deferred, making the heart sick! Miserable gnawing of disappointment with which I returned at nightfall, to force myself down to my books! Equally miserable rack of hope on which my nerves were stretched every morning when I rose, counting the hours till my day's work should be over, and my mad search begin again! At last "my torment did by length of time become my element." I returned steadily as ever to the studies which I had at first neglected, much to Mackaye's wonder and disgust; and a vain hunt after that face became a part of my daily

task, to be got through with the same dull, sullen effort, with which all I did was now transacted.

Mackaye, I suppose, at first, attributed my absences and idleness to my having got into bad company. But it was some weeks before he gently enough told me his suspicions, and they were answered by a burst of tears, and a passionate denial, which set them at rest forever. But I had not courage to tell him what was the matter with me. A sacred modesty, as well as a sense of the impossibility of explaining my emotions, held me back. I had a half-dread, too, to confess the whole truth, of his ridiculing a fancy, to say the least, so utterly impracticable; and my only confidant was a picture in the National Gallery, in one of the faces of which I had discovered some likeness to my Venus; and there I used to go and stand at spare half hours, and feel the happier for staring and staring, and whispering to the dead canvas the extravagances of my idolatry.

But soon the bitter draught of disappointment began to breed harsher thoughts in me. Those fine gentlemen who rode past me in the park, who rolled by in carriages, sitting face to face with ladies, as richly dressed, if not as beautiful, as she was—they could see her when they liked—why not I? What right had their eyes to a feast denied to mine? They, too, who did not appreciate, adore that beauty as I did—for who could worship her like me? At least they had not suffered for her as I had done; they had not stood in rain and frost, fatigue, and blank despair—watching—watching—month after month; and I was making coats for them! The very garment I was stitching at, might, in a day's time, be in her presence—touching her dress; and its wearer bowing, and smiling, and whispering—he had not bought that bliss by watching in the rain. It made me mad to think of it.

I will say no more about it. That is a period of my life on which I cannot even now look back without a shudder.

At last, after perhaps a year or more, I summoned up courage to tell my story to Sandy Mackaye, and burst

out with complaints more pardonable, perhaps, than reasonable.

"Why have I not as good a right to speak to her, to move in the same society in which she moves, as any of the fops of the day? Is it because these aristocrats are more intellectual than I? I should not fear to measure brains against most of them now; and give me the opportunities which they have, and I would die if I did not outstrip them. Why have I not those opportunities? Is that fault of others to be visited on me? Is it because they are more refined than I? What right have they, if this said refinement be so necessary a qualification, a difference so deep—that, without it, there is to be an everlasting gulf between man and man—what right have they to refuse to let me share in it, to give me the opportunity of acquiring it?"

"Wad ye ha' them set up a dancing academy for working men, wi' 'manners tocht here to the lower classes'? They'll no break up their ain monopoly; trust them for it! Na: if ye want to get amang them, I'll tell ye the way o't. Write a book o' poems, and ca' it 'A Voice fra' the Goose, by a working Tailor'—and then—why, after a dizen years or so of starving and scribbling for your bread, ye'll ha' a chance o' finding yoursel' a lion, and a flunkey, and a licker o' trenchers—ane that jokes for his dinner, and sells his soul for a fine leddy's smile—till ye presume to think they're in earnest, and fancy yoursel a man o' the same blude as they, and fa' in love wi' one o' them—and then they'll teach you your level, and send ye off to gauge whusky like Burns, or leave ye' to die in a ditch as they did wi' puir Thom."

"Let me die, anywhere or anyhow, if I can but be near her—see her——"

"Married to anither body?—and nursing anither body's bairns." Ah boy, boy—do ye think that was what ye were made for; to please yersel wi' a woman's smiles, or e'en a woman's kisses—or to please yersel at all? How do ye expect ever to be happy, or strong, or a man at a', as long as ye go on looking to enjoy yersel

—yersel? I ha' tried it. Mony was the year I looked for nought but my ain pleasure, and got it too, when it was a'

> Sandy Mackaye, bonny Sandy Mackaye,
> There he sits singing the lang simmer's day;
> Lassies gae to him,
> And kiss him, and woo him—
> Na bird is sa merry as Sandy Mackaye.

An' muckle good cam' o't. Ye may fancy I'm talking like a sour, disappointed auld carle. But I tell ye nay. I've got that's worth living for, though I am downhearted at times, and fancy a's wrong, and there's na hope for us on earth, we be a' sic liars—a' liars, I think: 'a universal liars-rock substrawtum,' as Mr. Carlyle says. I'm a great liar often mysel, especially when I'm praying. Do ye think I'd live on here in this meeserable crankit auld bane-barrel o' a body, if it was not for The Cause, and for the puir young fellows that come in to me whiles to get some book-learning about the gran' auld Roman times, when folks didna care for themselves, but for the nation, and a man counted wife and bairns and money as dross and dung, in comparison wi' the great Roman city, that was the mither o' them a', and wad last on, free and glorious, after they and their bairns were a' dead thegither? Hoot, man! If I had na The Cause to care for and to work for, whether I ever see it triumphant on earth or no—I'd just tak' the cauld-water-cure off Waterloo-bridge, and mak' mysel a case for the Humane Society."

"And what is The Cause?" I asked.

"Wud I tell ye? We want no ready-made freens o' The Cause. I dinna hauld wi' thae French indoctrinating pedants, that took to stick free opinions into a man as ye'd stick pins into a pincushion, to fa' out again the first shake. Na—The Cause must find a man, and tak' hauld o' him, willy-nilly, and grow up in him like an inspiration, till he can see nocht out in the light o't. Puir bairn!" he went on, looking with a half-sad, half-comic face at me—"puir bairn—like a young bear, wi' a' your sorrows before ye! This time seven years ye'll ha'

no need to come speering and questioning what The Cause is, and the Gran' Cause, and the Only Cause worth working for on the earth o' God. And noo gang your gate, and mak' fine feathers for foul birds. I'm gaun whar ye'll be ganging too, before lang."

As I went sadly out of the shop, he called me back.

"Stay a wee, bairn; there's the Roman History for ye. There ye'll read what The Cause is, and how they that seek their ain are no worthy thereof."

I took the book, and found in the legends of Brutus, and Cocles, and Scævola, and the retreat to the Mons Sacer, and the Gladiator's war, what The Cause was, and forgot awhile in those tales of antique heroism and patriotic self-sacrifice my own selfish longings and sorrows.

* * * * *

But, after all, the very advice which was meant to cure me of those selfish longings, only tended, by diverting me from my living outward idol, to turn my thoughts more than ever inward, and tempt them to feed on their own substance. I passed whole days on the workroom floor in brooding silence—my mind peopled with an incoherent rabble of phantasms patched up from every object of which I had ever read. I could not control my day-dreams; they swept me away with them over sea and land, and into the bowels of the earth. My soul escaped on every side from my civilized dungeon of brick and mortar, into the great free world from which my body was debarred. Now I was the corsair in the pride of freedom on the dark blue sea. Now I wandered in fairy caverns among the bones of primæval monsters. I fought at the side of Leonidas, and the Maccabee who stabbed the Sultan's elephant, and saw him crushed beneath its falling bulk. Now I was a hunter in tropic forests—I heard the parrots scream, and saw the humming birds flit on from gorgeous flower to flower. Gradually I took a voluntary pleasure in calling up these images, and working out their details into words with all the accuracy and care for which my small knowledge gave me materials. And as the self-indulgent habit grew on me, I began to

live two lives—one mechanical and outward, one inward and imaginative. The thread passed through my fingers without my knowing it; I did my work as a machine might do it. The dingy stifling room, the wan faces of my companions, the scanty meals which I snatched, I saw dimly, as in a dream. The tropics, and Greece, the imaginary battles which I fought, the phantoms into whose mouths I put my thoughts, were real and true to me. They met me when I woke—they floated along beside me as I walked to work—they acted their fantastic dramas before me through the sleepless hours of night. Gradually certain faces among them became familiar—certain personages grew into coherence, as embodiments of those few types of character which had struck me the most, and played an analogous part in every fresh fantasia. Sandy Mackaye's face figured incongruously enough as Leonidas, Brutus, a Pilgrim Father; and gradually, in spite of myself, and the fear with which I looked on the recurrence of that dream, Lillian's figure re-entered my fairy-land. I saved her from a hundred dangers; I followed her through dragon-guarded caverns and the corridors of magic castles; I walked by her side through the forests of the Amazon. . . . .

And now I began to crave for some means of expressing these fancies to myself. While they were mere thoughts, parts of me, they were unsatisfactory, however delicious. I longed to put them outside me, that I might look at them and talk to them as permanent independent things. First I tried to sketch them on the whitewashed walls of my garret, on scraps of paper begged from Mackaye, or picked up in the workroom. But from my ignorance of any rules of drawing, they were utterly devoid of beauty, and only excited my disgust. Besides, I had thoughts as well as objects to express—thoughts strange, sad, wild, about my own feelings, my own destiny, and drawing could not speak them for me.

Then I turned instinctively to poetry: with its rules I was getting rapidly conversant. The mere desire of imitation urged me on, and when I tried, the grace of rhyme and metre covered a thousand defects. I tell my

story, not as I saw it then, but as I see it now. A long and lonely voyage, with its monotonous days and sleepless nights—its sickness and heart-loneliness, has given me opportunities for analysing my past history which were impossible then, amid the ceaseless in-rush of new images, the ceaseless ferment of their re-combination, in which my life was passed from sixteen to twenty-five. The poet, I suppose, must be a seer as long as he is a worker, and a seer only. He has no time to philosophize—to "think about thinking," as Goethe, I have somewhere read, says that he never could do. It is too often only in sickness and prostration and sheer despair, that the fierce veracity and swift digestion of his soul can cease, and give him time to know himself and God's dealings with him; and for that reason it is good for him, too, to have been afflicted.

I do not write all this to boast of it; I am ready to bear sneers at my romance—my day-dreams—my unpractical habits of mind, for I know that I deserve them. But such was the appointed growth of my uneducated mind; no more unhealthy a growth, if I am to believe books, than that of many a carefully trained one. High-born geniuses, they tell me, have their idle visions as well as we working-men; and Oxford has seen of late years as wild Icarias conceived as ever were fathered by a red Republic. For, indeed, we have the same flesh and blood, the same God to teach us, the same devil to mislead us, whether we choose to believe it or not. But there were excuses for me. We Londoners are not accustomed from our youth to the poems of a great democratic genius, as the Scotchmen are to their glorious Burns. We have no chance of such an early acquaintance with poetic art as that which enabled John Bethune, one of the great 'unrepresented—the starving Scotch day-labourer, breaking stones upon the parish roads, to write at the age of seventeen such words as these:—

> Hail, hallow'd evening! sacred hour to me!
> Thy clouds of grey, thy vocal melody,
> Thy dreamy silence oft to me have brought
> A sweet exchange from toil to peaceful thought.

Ye purple heavens! how often has my eye,
Wearied with its long gaze on drudgery,
Look'd up and found refreshment in the hues
That gild thy vest with colouring profuse!

O, evening grey! how oft have I admired
Thy airy tapestry, whose radiance fired
The glowing minstrels of the olden time,
Until their very souls flow'd forth in rhyme.
And I have listened, till my spirit grew
Familiar with their deathless strains, and drew
From the same source some portion of the glow
Which fill'd their spirits, when from earth below
They scann'd thy golden imagery. And I
Have consecrated *thee*, bright evening sky
My fount of inspiration; and I fling
My spirit on thy clouds—an offering
To the great Deity of dying day,
Who hath transfused o'er thee his purple ray.
* * * *

After all, our dreams do little harm to the rich. Those who consider Chartism as synonymous with devil-worship, should bless and encourage them, for the very reason for which we working men ought to dread them; for, quickened into prurient activity by the low, novel-mongering press, they help to enervate and besot all but the noblest minds among us. Here and there a Thomas Cooper, sitting in Stafford gaol, after a youth spent in cobbling shoes, vents his treasures of classic and historic learning in a "Purgatory of Suicides"; or a Prince becomes the poet of the poor, no less for having fed his boyish fancy with "The Arabian Nights" and "The Pilgrim's Progress." But, with the most of us, sedentary and monotonous occupations, as has long been known, create of themselves a morbidly-meditative and fantastic turn of mind. And what else, in Heaven's name, ye fine gentlemen—what else can a working man do with his imagination, but dream? What else will you let him do with it, oh ye education-pedants, who fancy that you can teach the masses as you would drill soldiers, every soul alike, though you will not bestir yourselves to do even that? Are there no differences of rank—God's rank, not man's—among us? You have discovered, since your schoolboy

days, the fallacy of the old nomenclature which civilly classed us altogether as "the snobs," "the blackguards"; which even—so strong is habit—tempted Burke himself to talk of us as "the swinish multitude." You are finding yourselves wrong there. A few more years' experience not in mis-educating the poor, but in watching the poor really educate themselves, may teach you that we are not all by nature dolts and idiots; that there are differences of brain among us, just as great as there is between you; and that there are those among us whose education ought not to end, and will not end, with the putting off of the parish cap and breeches; whom it is cruelty, as well as folly, to toss back into the hell of mere manual drudgery, as soon as you have—if, indeed, you have been even so bountiful as that—excited in them a new thirst of the intellect and imagination. If you provide that craving with no wholesome food, you at least have no right to blame it if it shall gorge itself with poison.

Dare for once to do a strange thing, and let yourself be laughed at; go to a workman's meeting—a Chartist meeting, if you will; and look honestly at the faces and brows of those so-called incendiaries, whom your venal caricaturists have taught you to believe a mixture of curdog and baboon—we, for our part, shall not be ashamed to show foreheads against your laughing House of Commons—and then say, what employment can those men find in the soulless routine of mechanical labour for the mass of brain which they almost universally possess? They must either dream or agitate; perhaps they are now learning how to do both to some purpose.

But I have found, by sad experience, that there is little use in declamation. I had much better simply tell my story, and leave my readers to judge of the facts, if, indeed, they will be so far courteous as to believe them.

CHAPTER VIII.

LIGHT IN A DARK PLACE.

So I made my first attempt at poetry—need I say that my subject was the beautiful Lillian? And need I say, too, that I was as utterly disgusted at my attempt to express her in words, as I had been at my trial with the pencil? It chanced also, that after hammering out half a dozen verses, I met with Mr. Tennyson's poems; and the unequalled sketches of women that I found there, while they had, with the rest of the book, a new and abiding influence on my mind, were quite enough to show me my own fatal incompetency in that line. I threw my verses away, never to resume them. Perhaps I proved thereby the depth of my affection. Our mightiest feelings are always those which remain most unspoken. The most intense lovers and the greatest poets have generally, I think, written very little personal love-poetry, while they have shown in fictitious characters a knowledge of the passion too painfully intimate to be spoken of in the first person.

But to escape from my own thoughts, I could not help writing something; and to escape from my own private sorrows, writing on some matter with which I had no personal concern. And so, after much casting about for subjects, Childe Harold and the old missionary records contrived to celebrate a spiritual wedding in my brain, of which anomalous marriage came a proportionately anomalous offspring.

My hero was not to be a pirate, but a pious sea-rover, who, with a crew of saints, or at least uncommonly fine

fellows, who could be very manly and jolly, and yet all be good Christians, of a somewhat vague and latitudinarian cast of doctrine (for my own was becoming rapidly so), set forth under the red-cross flag to colonize and convert one of my old paradises, a South Sea Island.

I forget most of the lines—they were probably great trash, but I hugged them to my bosom as a young mother does her first child.

> 'Twas sunset in the lone Pacific world,
> The rich gleams fading in the western sky;
> Within the still Lagoon the sails were furled,
> The red-cross flag alone was flaunting high.
> Before them was the low and palm-fringed shore,
> Behind, the outer ocean's baffled roar.

After which valiant plunge *in medias res*, came a great lump of deception, after the manner of youths—of the island, and the whitehouses, and the banana groves, and above all, the single volcano towering over the whole, which

> Shaking a sinful isle with thundering shocks,
> Reproved the worshippers of stones and stocks.

Then how a line of foam appears on the Lagoon, which is supposed at first to be a shoal of fish, but turns out to be a troop of naked island beauties, swimming out to the ship. The decent missionaries were certainly guiltless of putting that into my head, whether they ever saw it or not—a great many things happening in the South Seas of which they find it convenient to say nothing. I think I picked it up from Wallis, or Cook, or some other plain spoken voyager.

The crew gaze in pardonable admiration, but the hero, in a long speech, reproves them for their lightmindedness, reminds them of their sacred mission, and informs them that,

> The soldiers of the cross should turn their eyes
> From carnal lusts and heathen vanities;

beyond which indisputable assertion I never got; for this being about the fiftieth stanza, I stopped to take breath a little; and reading and re-reading, patching and touching continually, grew so accustomed to my bantling's

face, that, like a mother, I could not tell whether it was handsome or hideous, sense or nonsense. I have since found out that the true plan, for myself at least, is to write off as much as possible at a time, and then lay it by and forget it for weeks—if I can, for months. After that, on returning to it, the mind regards it as something altogether strange and new, and can, or rather ought to, judge of it as it would of the work of another pen.

But really, between conceit and disgust, fancying myself one day a great new poet, and the next a mere twaddler, I got so puzzled and anxious, that I determined to pluck up courage, go to Mackaye, and ask him to solve the problem for me.

"Hech, sirs, poetry! I've been expecting it. I suppose it's the appointed gate o' a workman's intellectual life—that same lust o' versification. Aweel, aweel,—let's hear."

Blushing and trembling, I read my verses aloud in as resonant and magniloquent a voice as I could command. I thought Mackaye's upper lip would never stop lengthening, or his lower lip protruding. He chuckled intensely at the unfortunate rhyme between "shocks" and "stocks." Indeed, it kept him in chuckling matter for a whole month afterwards; but when I had got to the shoal of naked girls, he could bear no more, and burst out—

"What the deevil! is there no harlotry and idolatry here in England, that ye maun gang speering after it in the Cannibal Islands? Are ye gaun to be like they puir aristocrat bodies, that wad suner hear an Italian dog howl, than an English nightingale sing, and winna harken to Mr. John Thomas till he calls himself Giovanni Thomasino; or do ye tak yourself for a singing-bird, to go all your days tweedle-dumdeeing out into the lift, just for the lust o' hearing your ain clan clatter? Will ye be a man or a lintie? Coral Islands? Pacific? What do ye ken about Pacifics? Are ye a Cockney or a Cannibal Islander? Dinna stand there, ye gowk, as fusionless as a docken, but tell me that! Whaur do ye live?"

"What do you mean, Mr. Mackaye?" asked I, with a doleful and disappointed visage.

"Mean—why, if God had meant ye to write aboot Pacifics, He'd ha' put ye there—and because He means ye to write aboot London town, He's put ye there—and gien ye an unco sharp taste o' the ways o't; and I'll gie ye anither. Come along wi' me."

And he seized me by the arm, and hardly giving me time to put on my hat, marched me out into the streets, and away through Clare Market to St. Giles's.

It was a foul, chilly, foggy Saturday night. From the butchers' and greengrocers' shops the gas lights flared and flickered, wild and ghastly, over haggard groups of slip-shod dirty women, bargaining for scraps of stale meat and frost-bitten vegetables, wrangling about short weight and bad quality. Fish-stalls and fruit-stalls lined the edge of the greasy pavement, sending up odours as foul as the language of sellers and buyers. Blood and sewer-water crawled from under doors and out of spouts, and reeked down the gutters among offal, animal and vegetable, in every stage of putrefaction. Foul vapours rose from cowsheds and slaughter houses, and the doorways of undrained alleys, where the inhabitants carried the filth out on their shoes from the back-yard into the court, and from the court up into the main street; while above, hanging like cliffs over the streets—those narrow, brawling torrents of filth, and poverty, and sin, —the houses with their teeming load of life were piled up into the dingy, choking night. A ghastly, deafening sickening sight it was. Go, scented Belgravian! and see what London is! and then go to the library which God has given thee—one often fears in vain—and see what science says this London might be!

"Ay," he muttered to himself, as he strode along, "sing awa; get yoursel wi' child wi' pretty fancies and gran' words, like the rest o' the poets, and gang to hell for it."

"To hell, Mr. Mackaye?"

"Ay, to a verra real hell, Alton Locke, laddie—a warse ane than ony fiends' kitchen, or subterranean Smithfield that ye'll hear o' in the pulpits—the hell on earth o'

being a flunkey, and a humbug, and a useless peacock, wasting God's gifts on your ain lusts and pleasures—and kenning it—and not being able to get oot o' it, for the chains o' vanity and self-indulgence. I've warned ye. Now look there——"

He stopped suddenly before the entrance of a miserable alley—

"Look! there's not a soul down that yard but's either beggar, drunkard, thief, or warse. Write anent that! Say how you saw the mouth o' hell, and the twa pillars thereof at the entry—the pawnbroker's shop o' one side, and the gin palace at the other—twa monstrous deevils, eating up men, and women, and bairns, body and soul. Look at the jaws o' the monsters, how they open and open, and swallow in anither victim and anither. Write anent that."

"What jaws, Mr. Mackaye?"

"They faulding-doors o' the gin shop, goose. Are na they a mair damnable man-devouring idol than ony red-hot statue o' Moloch, or wicker Gogmagog, wherein thae auld Britons burnt their prisoners? Look at thae bare-footed bare-backed hizzies, with their arms roun' the men's necks, and their mouths full o' vitriol and beastly words! Look at that Irishwoman pouring the gin down the babbie's throat! Look at that rough o' a boy gaun out o' the pawn shop, where he's been pledging the handker-chief he stole the morning, into the gin shop, to buy beer poisoned wi' grains o' paradise, and cocculus indicus, and saut, and a' damnable, maddening, thirst-breeding, lust-breeding drugs! Look at that girl that went in wi' a shawl on her back and cam' out wi'out ane! Drunkards frae the breast!—harlots frae the cradle! damned before they're born! John Calvin had an inkling o' the truth there, I'm a'most driven to think, wi' his reprobation deevil's doctrines!

"Well—but—Mr. Mackaye, I know nothing about these poor creatures."

"Then ye ought. What do ye ken anent the Pacific? Which is maist to your business?—thae bare-backed hizzies that play the harlot o' the other side o' the warld,

or these—these thousands o' bare-backed hizzies that play the harlot o' your ain side—made out o' your ain flesh and blude? You a poet! True poetry, like true charity, my laddie, begins at hame. If ye'll be a poet at a', ye maun be a cockney poet; and while the cockneys be what they be, ye maun write, like Jeremiah of old, o' lamentation and mourning and woe, for the sins o' your people. Gin you want to learn the spirit o' a people's poet, down wi' your Bible and read thae auld Hebrew prophets; gin ye wad learn the style, read your Burns frae morning till night; and gin ye'd learn the matter, just gang after your nose, and keep your eyes open, and ye'll no miss it."

"But all this is so—so unpoetical."

"Hech! Is there no the heeven above them there, and the hell beneath them? and God frowning, and the deevil grinning? No poetry there! Is no the verra idea of the classic tragedy defined to be, man conquered by circumstance? Canna ye see it there? And the verra idea of the modern tragedy, man conquering circumstance?—and I'll show you that, too—in mony a garret where no eye but the gude God's enters, to see the patience, and the fortitude, and the self-sacrifice, and the luve stronger than death, that's shining in thae dark places o' the earth. Come wi' me, and see."

We went on through a back street or two, and then into a huge, miserable house, which, a hundred years ago, perhaps, had witnessed the luxury, and rung to the laughter of some one great fashionable family, alone there in their glory. Now every room of it held its family, or its group of families—a phalanstery of all the fiends;—its grand staircase, with the carved balustrades rotting and crumbling away piecemeal, converted into a common sewer for all its inmates. Up stair after stair we went, while wails of children, and curses of men, steamed out upon the hot stifling rush of air from every doorway, till, at the topmost story, we knocked at a garret door. We entered. Bare it was of furniture, comfortless, and freezing cold; but, with the exception of the plaster dropping from the roof, and the broken windows, patched

with rags and paper, there was a scrupulous neatness about the whole, which contrasted strangely with the filth and slovenliness outside. There was no bed in the room—no table. On a broken chair by the chimney sat a miserable old woman, fancying that she was warming her hands over embers which had long been cold, shaking her head, and muttering to herself, with palsied lips, about the guardians and the workhouse; while upon a few rags on the floor lay a girl, ugly, small-pox marked, hollow eyed, emaciated, her only bed clothes the skirt of a large handsome new riding-habit, at which two other girls, wan and tawdry, were stitching busily, as they sat right and left of her on the floor. The old woman took no notice of us as we entered; but one of the girls looked up, and, with a pleased gesture of recognition, put her finger up to her lips, and whispered, "Ellen's asleep."

"I'm not asleep, dears," answered a faint, unearthly voice; "I was only praying. Is that Mr. Mackaye?"

"Ay, my lassies; but ha' ye gotten na fire the nicht?"

"No," said one of them, bitterly, "we've earned no fire to-night, by fair trade or foul either."

The sick girl tried to raise herself up and speak, but was stopped by a frightful fit of coughing and expectoration, as painful, apparently, to the sufferer as it was, I confess, disgusting even to me.

I saw Mackaye slip something into the hand of one of the girls, and whisper, "A half-hundred of coals;" to which she replied, with an eager look of gratitude that I never can forget, and hurried out. Then the sufferer, as if taking advantage of her absence, began to speak quickly and eagerly.

"Oh, Mr. Mackaye—dear, kind Mr. Mackaye—do speak to her; and do speak to poor Lizzy here! I'm not afraid to say it before her, because she's more gentle like, and hasn't learnt to say bad words yet—but do speak to them, and tell them not to go the bad way, like all the rest. Tell them it'll never prosper. I know it is want that drives them to it, as it drives all of us—but tell them it's best to starve and die honest girls, than to go about with the shame and the curse of God on their hearts, for

the sake of keeping this poor, miserable, vile body together a few short years more in this world o' sorrow. Do tell them, Mr. Mackaye."

"I'm thinking," said he, with the tears running down his old withered face, "ye'll mak a better preacher at that text than I shall, Ellen."

"Oh, no, no; who am I, to speak to them?—it's no merit o' mine, Mr. Mackaye, that the Lord's kept me pure through it all. I should have been just as bad as any of them, if the Lord had not kept me out of temptation in His great mercy, by making me the poor, ill-favoured creature I am. From that time I was burnt when I was a child, and had the small-pox afterwards, oh! how sinful I was, and repined and rebelled against the Lord! And now I see it was all His blessed mercy to keep me out of evil, pure and unspotted for my dear Jesus, when He comes to take me to Himself. I saw Him last night, Mr. Mackaye, as plain as I see you now, all in a flame of beautiful white fire, smiling at me so sweetly; and He showed me the wounds in His hands and His feet, and He said, 'Ellen, my own child, those that suffer with me here, they shall be glorified with me hereafter, for I'm coming very soon to take you home.'"

Sandy shook his head at all this with a strange expression of face, as if he sympathized and yet disagreed, respected and yet smiled at the shape which her religious ideas had assumed; and I remarked in the meantime that the poor girl's neck and arm were all scarred and distorted, apparently from the effects of a burn.

"Ah," said Sandy, at length, "I tauld ye ye were the better preacher of the two; ye've mair comfort to gie Sandy than he has to gie the like o' ye. But how is the wound in your back the day?"

Oh, it was wonderfully better! the doctor had come and given her such blessed ease with a great thick leather he had put under it, and then she did not feel the boards through so much. "But oh, Mr. Mackaye, I'm so afraid it will make me live longer to keep me away from my dear Saviour. And there's one thing, too, that's breaking my heart, and makes me long to die this very minute.

even if I didn't go to Heaven at all, Mr. Mackaye." (And she burst out crying, and between her sobs it came out, as well as I could gather, that her notion was, that her illness was the cause of keeping the girls in "*the bad way*," as she called it.) "For Lizzy here, I did hope that she had repented of it after all my talking to her; but since I've been so bad, and the girls have had to keep me most o' the time, she's gone out of nights just as bad as ever."

Lizzy had hid her face in her hands the greater part of this speech. Now she looked up passionately, almost fiercely—

"Repent—I have repented—I repent of it every hour—I hate myself, and hate all the world because of it; but I must—I must; I cannot see her starve, and I cannot starve myself. When she first fell sick she kept on as long as she could, doing what she could, and then between us we only earned three shillings a week, and there was ever so much to take off for fire, and twopence for thread, and fivepence for candles; and then we were always getting fined, because they never gave us out the work till too late on purpose, and then they lowered prices again; and now Ellen can't work at all, and there's four of us with the old lady, to keep off two's work that couldn't keep themselves alone."

"Doesn't the parish allow the old lady anything?" I ventured to ask.

"They used to allow half-a-crown for a bit; and the doctor ordered Ellen things from the parish, but it isn't half of 'em she ever got; and when the meat came, it was half times not fit to eat, and when it was her stomach turned against it. If she was a lady she'd be cockered up with all sorts of soups and jellies, and nice things, just the minute she fancied 'em, and lie on a water bed instead of the bare floor—and so she ought; but where's the parish 'll do that? And the hospital wouldn't take her in because she was incurable; and, besides, the old'un wouldn't let her go—nor into the union neither. When she's in a good-humour like, she'll sit by her by the hour, holding her hand and kissing of it, and nursing of it, for

all the world like a doll. But she won't hear of the workhouse; so now, these last three weeks, they takes off all her pay, because they says she must go into the house, and not kill her daughter by keeping her out—as if they warn't a killing her themselves."

"No workhouse—no workhouse!" said the old woman, turning round suddenly, in a clear, lofty voice. "No workhouse, sir, for an officer's daughter!"

And she relapsed into her stupor.

At that moment the other girl entered with the coals—but without staying to light the fire, ran up to Ellen with some trumpery dainty she had bought, and tried to persuade her to eat it.

"We have been telling Mr. Mackaye everything," said poor Lizzy.

"A pleasant story, isn't it? Oh! if that fine lady, as we're making that riding-habit for, would just spare only half the money that goes to dressing her up to ride in the park, to send us out to the colonies, wouldn't I be an honest girl there?—maybe an honest man's wife! Oh, my God, wouldn't I slave my fingers to the bone to work for him! Wouldn't I mend my life then! I couldn't help it—it would be like getting into heaven out of hell. But now—we must—we must, I tell you. I shall go mad soon, I think, or take to drink. When I passed the gin-shop down there just now, I had to run like mad for fear I should go in; and if I once took to that——Now then, to work again. Make up the fire, Mrs. * * * *, please do."

And she sat down, and began stitching frantically at the riding-habit, from which the other girl had hardly lifted her hands or eyes for a moment during our visit.

We made a motion as if to go.

"God bless you," said Ellen; "come again soon, dear Mr. Mackaye."

"Good-bye," said the elder girl; "and good-night to you. Night and day's all the same here—we must have this home by seven o'clock to-morrow morning. My lady's going to ride early, they say, whoever she may be, and we must just sit up all night. It's often we haven't

had our clothes off for a week together, from four in the morning till two the next morning sometimes—stitch, stitch, stitch. Somebody's wrote a song about that—I'll learn to sing it—it'll sound fitting-like up here."

"Better sing hymns," said Ellen.

"Hymns for * * * * * * ?" answered the other, and then burst out into that peculiar, wild, ringing, fiendish laugh—has my reader never heard it?

I pulled out the two or three shillings which I possessed, and tried to make the girls take them, for the sake of poor Ellen.

"No; you're a working man, and we won't feed on you—you'll want it some day—all the trade's going the same way as we, as fast as ever it can!"

Sandy and I went down the stairs.

"Poetic element? Yon lassie, rejoicing in her disfigurement and not her beauty—like the nuns of Peterborough in auld time—is there na poetry there? That puir lassie, dying on the bare boards, and seeing her Saviour in her dreams, is there na poetry there, callant? That auld body owre the fire, wi' her 'an officer's dochter,' is there na poetry there? That ither, prostituting hersel to buy food for her freen—is there na poetry there?—tragedy—

> With hues as when some mighty painter dips
> His pen in dyes of earthquake and eclipse.

Ay, Shelley's gran'; always gran'; but Fact is grander—God and Satan are grander. All around ye, in every gin-shop and costermonger's cellar, are God and Satan at death grips; every garret is a hall. Paradise Lost or Paradise Regained; and will ye think it beneath ye to be the 'People's Poet?'"

CHAPTER IX.

POETRY AND POETS.

In the history of individuals, as well as in that of nations, there is often a period of sudden blossoming—a short luxuriant summer, not without its tornadoes and thunder-glooms, in which all the buried seeds of past observation leap forth together into life, and form, and beauty. And such with me were the two years that followed. I thought—I talked poetry to myself all day long. I wrote nightly on my return from work. I am astonished, on looking back, at the variety and quantity of my productions during that short time. My subjects were intentionally and professedly cockney ones. I had taken Mackaye at his word. I had made up my mind, that if I had any poetic power, I must do my duty therewith in that station of life to which it had pleased God to call me, and look at everything simply and faithfully as a London artizan. To this, I suppose, is to be attributed the little geniality and originality for which the public have kindly praised my verses—a geniality which sprung, not from the atmosphere whence I drew, but from the honesty and single-mindedness with which, I hope, I laboured. Not from the atmosphere, indeed,—that was ungenial enough; crime and poverty, all-devouring competition, and hopeless struggles against Mammon and Moloch, amid the roar of wheels, the ceaseless stream of pale, hard faces, intent on gain, or brooding over woe; amid endless prison walls of brick, beneath a lurid, crushing sky of smoke and mist. It was a dark, noisy, thunderous element that London life; a

troubled sea that cannot rest, casting up mire and dirt; resonant of the clanking of chains, the grinding of remorseless machinery, the wail of lost spirits from the pit. And it did its work upon me; it gave a gloomy colouring, a glare as of some Dantean "Inferno," to all my utterances. It did not excite me or make me fierce—I was too much inured to it—but it crushed and saddened me; it deepened in me that peculiar melancholy of intellectual youth, which Mr. Carlyle has christened for ever by one of his immortal nicknames—"Werterism"; I battened on my own melancholy. I believed, I loved to believe, that every face I passed bore the traces of discontent as deep as was my own—and was I so far wrong? Was I so far wrong either in the gloomy tone of my own poetry? Should not a London poet's work just now be to cry, like the Jew of old, about the walls of Jerusalem, "Woe, woe to this city!" Is this a time to listen to the voices of singing men and singing women? or to cry, "Oh! that my head were a fountain of tears, that I might weep for the sins of my people"? Is it not noteworthy, also, that it is in this vein that the London poets have always been greatest? Which of poor Hood's lyrics have an equal chance of immortality with "The Song of the Shirt" and "The Bridge of Sighs," rising, as they do, right out of the depths of that Inferno, sublime from their very simplicity? Which of Charles Mackay's lyrics can compare for a moment with the Eschylean grandeur, the terrible rhythmic lilt of his "Cholera Chant"—

Dense on the stream the vapours lay,
Thick as wool on the cold highway;
Spungy and dim each lonely lamp
Shone o'er the streets so dull and damp;
The moonbeams could not pierce the cloud
That swathed the city like a shroud;
There stood three shapes on the bridge alone,
Three figures by the coping-stone;
Gaunt and tall and undefined,
Spectres built of mist and wind.
* * * *
I see his footmarks east and west—
I hear his tread in the silence fall—

He shall not sleep, he shall not rest—
He comes to aid us one and all.
Were men as wise as men might be,
They would not work for you, for me,
For him that cometh over the sea;
But they will not hear the warning voice:
The Cholera comes,—Rejoice! rejoice!
He shall be lord of the swarming town!
And mow them down, and mow them down!
* * * * *

Not that I neglected, on the other hand, every means of extending the wanderings of my spirit into sunnier and more verdant pathways. If I had to tell the gay ones above of the gloom around me, I had also to go forth into the sunshine, to bring home if it were but a wild-flower garland to those that sit in darkness and the shadow of death. That was all that I could offer them. The reader shall judge, when he has read this book throughout, whether I did not at last find for them something better than even all the beauties of nature.

But it was on canvas, and not among realities, that I had to choose my garlands; and therefore the picture galleries became more than ever my favourite—haunt, I was going to say; but, alas! it was not six times a year that I got access to them. Still, when once every May I found myself, by dint of a hard saved shilling, actually within the walls of that to me enchanted palace, the Royal Academy Exhibition—Oh, ye rich! who gaze round you at will upon your prints and pictures, if hunger is, as they say, a better sauce than any Ude invents, and fasting itself may become the handmaid of luxury, you should spend, as I did perforce, weeks and months shut out from every glimpse of Nature, if you would taste her beauties, even on canvas, with perfect relish and childish self-abandonment. How I loved and blessed those painters! how I thanked Creswick for every transparent shade-chequered pool; Fielding, for every rain-clad down; Cooper, for every knot of quiet cattle beneath the cool grey willows; Stanfield, for every snowy peak, and sheet of foam-fringed sapphire—each and every one of them a leaf out of the magic book which else was ever closed to me. Again, I say, how I loved and blest those painters!

On the other hand, I was not neglecting to read as well as to write poetry; and, to speak first of the highest, I know no book, always excepting Milton, which at once so quickened and exalted my poetical view of man and his history, as that great prose poem, the single epic of modern days, Thomas Carlyle's "French Revolution." Of the general effect which his works had on me, I shall say nothing: it was the same as they have had, thank God, on thousands of my class and of every other. But that book above all first recalled me to the overwhelming and yet ennobling knowledge that there was such a thing as Duty; first taught me to see in history not the mere farce-tragedy of man's crimes and follies, but the dealings of a righteous Ruler of the universe, whose ways are in the great deep, and whom the sins and errors, as well as the virtues and discoveries of man, must obey and justify.

Then, in a happy day, I fell on Alfred Tennyson's poetry, and found there, astonished and delighted, the embodiment of thoughts about the earth around me which I had concealed, because I fancied them peculiar to myself. Why is it that the latest poet has generally the greatest influence over the minds of the young? Surely not for the mere charm of novelty? The reason is that he, living amid the same hopes, the same temptations, the same sphere of observation as they, gives utterance and outward form to the very questions which, vague and wordless, have been exercising their hearts. And what endeared Tennyson especially to me, the working man, was, as I afterwards discovered, the altogether democratic tendency of his poems. True, all great poets are by their office democrats; seers of man only as man; singers of the joys, the sorrows, the aspirations common to all humanity; but in Alfred Tennyson there is an element especially democratic, truly levelling; not his political opinions, about which I know nothing, and care less, but his handling of the trivial every-day sights and sounds of nature. Brought up, as I understand, in a part of England which possesses not much of the picturesque, and nothing of that which the vulgar call sublime, he

has learnt to see that in all nature, in the hedgerow and the sandbank, as well as in the alp peak and the ocean waste, is a world of true sublimity,—a minute infinite,—an ever fertile garden of poetic images, the roots of which are in the unfathomable and the eternal, as truly as any phenomenon which astonishes and awes the eye. The descriptions of the desolate pools and creeks where the dying swan floated, the hint of the silvery marsh mosses by Mariana's moat, came to me like revelations. I always knew there was something beautiful, wonderful, sublime, in those flowery dykes of Battersea Fields; in the long gravelly sweeps of that lone tidal shore; and here was a man who had put them into words for me! This is what I call democratic art—the revelation of the poetry which lies in common things. And surely all the age is tending in that direction: in Landseer and his dogs—in Fielding and his downs, with a host of noble fellow-artists—and in all authors who have really seized the nation's mind, from Crabbe and Burns and Wordsworth to Hood and Dickens, the great tide sets ever onward, outward, towards that which is common to the many, not that which is exclusive to the few—towards the likeness of Him who causes His rain to fall on the just and the unjust, and His sun to shine on the evil and the good; who knoweth the cattle upon a thousand hills, and all the beasts of the field are in His sight.

Well—I must return to my story. And here some one may ask me, "But did you not find this true spiritual democracy, this universal knowledge and sympathy, in Shakspeare above all other poets?" It may be my shame to have to confess it; but though I find it now, I did not then. I do not think, however, my case is singular: from what I can ascertain, there is, even with regularly educated minds, a period of life at which that great writer is not appreciated, just on account of his very greatness; on account of the deep and large experience which the true understanding of his plays requires—experience of man, of history, of art, and above all of those sorrows whereby, as Hezekiah says, and as I have learnt almost too well—"whereby men

live, and in all which is the life of the spirit." At seventeen, indeed, I had devoured Shakspeare, though merely for the food to my fancy which his plots and incidents supplied, for the gorgeous colouring of his scenery: but at the period of which I am now writing, I had exhausted that source of mere pleasure; I was craving for more explicit and dogmatic teaching than any which he seemed to supply; and for three years, strange as it may appear, I hardly ever looked into his pages. Under what circumstances I afterwards recurred to his exhaustless treasures, my readers shall in due time be told.

So I worked away manfully with such tools and stock as I possessed, and of course produced, at first, like all young writers, some sufficiently servile imitations of my favourite poets.

"Ugh!" said Sandy, "wha wants mongrels atween Burns and Tennyson? A gude stock baith: but gin ye'd cross the breed ye maun unite the spirits, and no the manners, o' the men. Why maun ilk a one the noo steal his neebor's barnacles, before he glints out o' windows? Mak a style for yoursel, laddie; ye're na mair Scots hind than ye are Lincolnshire laird: sae gang yer ain gate and leave them to gang theirs; and just mak a gran', brode, simple, Saxon style for yoursel."

"But how can I, till I know what sort of a style it ought to be?"

"Oh! but yon's amazing like Tom Sheridan's answer to his father. 'Tom,' says the auld man, 'I'm thinking ye maun tak a wife.' 'Verra weel, father,' says the puir skellum; 'and wha's wife shall I tak?' Wha's style shall I tak? say all the callants the noo. Mak a style as ye would mak a wife, by marrying her a' to yoursel; and ye'll nae mair ken what's your style till it's made, than ye'll ken what your wife's like till she's been mony a year by your ingle."

"My dear Mackaye," I said, "you have the most unmerciful way of raising difficulties, and then leaving poor fellows to lay the ghost for themselves."

"Hech, then, I'm a'thegither a negative teacher, as they ca' it in the new lallans. I'll gang out o' my gate to tell

a man his kye are laired, but I'm no obligated thereby to pu' them out for him. After a', nae man is rid o' a difficulty till he's conquered it single-handed for himsel: besides, I'm na poet, mair's the gude hap for you."

"Why, then?"

"Och, och! they're puir, feckless, crabbit, unpractical bodies, they poets; but if it's your doom, ye maun dree it; and I'm sair afeard ye ha' gotten the disease o' genius, mair's the pity, and maun write, I suppose, willy-nilly. Some folks' booels are that made o' catgut, that they canna stir without chirruping and screeking."

However, *œstro percitus*, I wrote on; and in about two years and a half had got together "Songs of the Highways" enough to fill a small octavo volume, the circumstances of whose birth shall be given hereafter. Whether I ever attained to anything like an original style, readers must judge for themselves—the readers of the same volume I mean, for I have inserted none of those poems in this my autobiography; first, because it seems too like puffing my own works; and next, because I do not want to injure the as yet not over great sale of the same. But, if any one's curiosity is so far excited that he wishes to see what I have accomplished, the best advice which I can give him is, to go forth, and buy all the working-men's poetry which has appeared during the last twenty years, without favour or exception; among which he must needs, of course, find mine, and also, I am happy to say, a great deal which is much better and more instructive than mine.

CHAPTER X.

HOW FOLKS TURN CHARTISTS.

THOSE who read my story only for amusement, I advise to skip this chapter. Those, on the other hand, who really wish to ascertain what working men actually do suffer—to see whether their political discontent has not its roots, not merely in fanciful ambition, but in misery and slavery most real and agonizing—those in whose eyes the accounts of a system, or rather barbaric absence of all system, which involves starvation, nakedness, prostitution, and long imprisonment in dungeons worse than the cells of the Inquisition, will be invested with something at least of tragic interest, may, I hope, think it worth their while to learn how the clothes which they wear are made, and listen to a few occasional statistics, which, though they may seem to the wealthy mere lists of dull figures, are to the workmen symbols of terrible physical realities—of hunger, degradation, and despair.*

Well: one day our employer died. He had been one of the old sort of fashionable West-end tailors in the fast decreasing honourable trade; keeping a modest shop, hardly to be distinguished from a dwelling-house, except by his name on the window blinds. He paid good prices for work, though not as good, of course as he had given twenty years before, and prided himself upon having all

* Facts still worse than those which Mr. Locke's story contains have been made public by the *Morning Chronicle* in a series of noble letters on "Labour and the Poor"; which we entreat all Christian people to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest." "That will be better for them," as Mahomet, in similar cases, used to say.

his work done at home. His workrooms, as I have said, were no elysiums; but still, as good, alas! as those of three tailors out of four. He was proud, luxurious, foppish; but he was honest and kindly enough, and did many a generous thing by men who had been long in his employ. At all events, his journeymen could live on what he paid them.

But his son, succeeding to the business, determined, like Rehoboam of old, to go ahead with the times. Fired with the great spirit of the nineteenth century—at least with that one which is vulgarly considered its especial glory—he resolved to make haste to be rich. His father had made money very slowly of late; while dozens, who had begun business long after him, had now retired to luxurious ease and suburban villas. Why should he remain in the minority? Why should he not get rich as fast as he could? Why should he stick to the old, slow-going, honourable trade? Out of some four hundred and fifty West-end tailors, there were not one hundred left who were old-fashioned and stupid enough to go on keeping down their own profits by having all their work done at home and at first-hand. Ridiculous scruples! The government knew none such. Were not the army clothes, the post-office clothes, the policemen's clothes, furnished by contractors and sweaters, who hired the work at low prices, and let it out again to journeymen at still lower ones? Why should he pay his men two shillings where the government paid them one? Were there not cheap houses even at the West-end, which had saved several thousands a year merely by reducing their workmen's wages? And if the workmen chose to take lower wages, he was not bound actually to make them a present of more than they asked for? They would go to the cheapest market for anything they wanted, and so must he. Besides, wages had really been quite exorbitant. Half his men threw each of them as much money away in gin and beer yearly, as would pay two workmen at cheap house. Why was he to be robbing his family of comforts to pay for their extravagance? And charging his customers, too, unnecessarily high prices—it was really robbing the public!

Such, I suppose, were some of the arguments which led to an official announcement, one Saturday night, that our young employer intended to enlarge his establishment, for the purpose of commencing business in the "show-trade"; and that, emulous of Messrs. Aaron, Levi, and the rest of that class, magnificent alterations were to take place in the premises, to make room for which our work-rooms were to be demolished, and that for that reason—for of course it was only for that reason—all work would in future be given out, to be made up at the men's own homes.

Our employer's arguments, if they were such as I suppose, were reasonable enough according to the present code of commercial morality. But, strange to say, the auditory, insensible to the delight with which the public would view the splendid architectural improvements—with taste too grovelling to appreciate the glories of plate-glass shop-fronts and brass scroll work—too selfish to rejoice, for its own sake, in the beauty of arabesques and chandeliers, which, though they never might behold, the astonished public would—with souls too niggardly to leap for joy at the thought that gents would henceforth buy the registered guanaco vest, and the patent elastic omni-seasonum paletôt half-a-crown cheaper than ever—or that needy noblemen would pay three-pound-ten instead of five pounds for their footmen's liveries—received the news, clod-hearted as they were, in sullen silence, and actually, when they got into the street, broke out into murmurs, perhaps into execrations.

"Silence!" said Crossthwaite; "walls have ears. Come down to the nearest house of call, and talk it out like men, instead of grumbling in the street like fish-fags."

So down we went. Crossthwaite, taking my arm, strode on in moody silence—once muttering to himself, bitterly—

"Oh, yes; all right and natural! What can the little sharks do but follow the big ones?"

We took a room, and Crossthwaite coolly saw us all in and locking the door, stood with his back against it.

"Now then, mind, 'One and all,' as the Cornishmen

say, and no peaching. If any man is scoundrel enough to carry tales, I'll—"

"Do what?" asked Jemmy Downes, who had settled himself on the table, with a pipe and a pot of porter. "You arn't the king of the Cannibal Islands, as I know of, to cut a cove's head off?"

"No; but if a poor man's prayer can bring God's curse down upon a traitor's head—it may stay on his rascally shoulders till it rots."

"If ifs and ans were pots and pans. Look at Shechem Isaacs, that sold penknives in the street six months ago, now a-riding in his own carriage, all along of turning sweater. If God's curse is like that—I'll be happy to take any man's share of it."

Some new idea seemed twinkling in the fellow's cunning bloated face as he spoke. I, and others also, shuddered at his words; but we all forgot them a moment afterwards, as Crossthwaite began to speak.

"We were all bound to expect this. Every working tailor must come to this at last, on the present system; and we are only lucky in having been spared so long. You all know where this will end—in the same misery as fifteen thousand out of twenty thousand of our class are enduring now. We shall become the slaves, often the bodily prisoners, of Jews, middlemen, and sweaters, who draw their livelihood out of our starvation. We shall have to face, as the rest have, ever decreasing prices of labour, ever increasing profits made out of that labour by the contractors who will employ us—arbitrary fines, inflicted at the caprice of hirelings—the competition of women, and children, and starving Irish—our hours of work will increase one-third, our actual pay decrease to less than one-half; and in all this we shall have no hope, no chance of improvement in wages, but ever more penury, slavery, misery, as we are pressed on by those who are sucked by fifties—almost by hundreds—yearly, out of the honourable trade in which we were brought up, into the infernal system of contract work, which is devouring our trade and many others, body and soul. Our wives will be forced to sit up night and day to help

us—our children must labour from the cradle without chance of going to school, hardly of breathing the fresh air of heaven,—our boys, as they grow up, must turn beggars or paupers—our daughters, as thousands do, must eke out their miserable earnings by prostitution. And after all, a whole family will not gain what one of us had been doing, as yet, single-handed. You know there will be no hope for us. There is no use appealing to government or parliament. I don't want to talk politics here. I shall keep them for another place. But you can recollect as well as I can, when a deputation of us went up to a member of parliament—one that was reputed a philosopher, and a political economist, and a liberal—and set before him the ever-increasing penury and misery of our trade, and of those connected with it; you recollect his answer—that, however glad he would be to help us, it was impossible—he could not alter the laws of nature—that wages were regulated by the amount of competition among the men themselves, and that it was no business of government, or any one else, to interfere in contracts between the employer and employed, that those things regulated themselves by the laws of political economy, which it was madness and suicide to oppose. He may have been a wise man. I only know that he was a rich one. Every one speaks well of the bridge which carries him over. Every one fancies the laws which fill his pockets to be God's laws. But I say this, If neither government nor members of parliament can help us, we must help ourselves. Help yourselves, and heaven will help you. Combination among ourselves is the only chance. One thing we can do—sit still."

"And starve!" said some one.

"Yes, and starve! Better starve than sin. I say, it is a sin to give in to this system. It is a sin to add our weight to the crowd of artizans who are now choking and strangling each other to death, as the prisoners did in the black hole of Calcutta. Let those who will turn beasts of prey, and feed upon their fellows; but let us at least keep ourselves pure. It may be the law of political civilization, the law of nature, that the rich should eat

up the poor, and the poor eat up each other. Then I here rise up and curse that law, that civilization, that nature. Either I will destroy them, or they shall destroy me. As a slave, as an increased burden on my fellow-sufferers, I will not live. So help me God! I will take no work home to my house; and I call upon every one here to combine, and to sign a protest to that effect."

"What's the use of that, my good Mr. Crossthwaite?" interrupted some one, querulously. "Don't you know what came of the strike a few years ago, when this piece-work and sweating first came in? The masters made fine promises, and never kept 'em; and the men who stood out had their places filled up with poor devils who were glad enough to take the work at any price—just as ours will be. There's no use kicking against the pricks. All the rest have come to it, and so must we. We must live somehow, and half a loaf is better than no bread; and even that half loaf will go into other men's mouths, if we don't snap at it at once. Besides, we can't force others to strike. We may strike and starve ourselves, but what's the use of a dozen striking out of 20,000?"

"Will you sign the protest, gentlemen, or not?" asked Crossthwaite, in a determined voice.

Some half-dozen said they would if the others would.

"And the others won't. Well, after all, one man must take the responsibility, and I am that man. I will sign the protest by myself. I will sweep a crossing—I will turn cress-gatherer, rag-picker; I will starve piecemeal, and see my wife starve with me; but do the wrong thing I will not! The Cause wants martyrs. If I must be one, I must."

All this while my mind had been undergoing a strange perturbation. The notion of escaping that infernal work-room, and the company I met there—of taking my work home, and thereby, as I hoped, gaining more time for study—at least, having my books on the spot ready at every odd moment, was most enticing. I had hailed the proposed change as a blessing to me, till I heard Crossthwaite's arguments—not that I had not known the facts before; but it had never struck me till then that it was

a real sin against my class to make myself a party in the system by which they were allowing themselves (under temptation enough, God knows) to be enslaved. But now I looked with horror on the gulf of penury before me, into the vortex of which not only I, but my whole trade, seemed irresistibly sucked. I thought, with shame and remorse, of the few shillings which I had earned at various times by taking piecework home, to buy my candles for study. I whispered my doubts to Crossthwaite, as he sat, pale and determined, watching the excited and querulous discussions among the other workmen.

"What? So you expect to have time to read? Study after sixteen hours a day stitching? Study, when you cannot earn money enough to keep you from wasting and shrinking away day by day? Study, with your heart full of shame and indignation, fresh from daily insult and injustice? Study, with the black cloud of despair and penury in front of you? Little time, or heart, or strength, will you have to study, when you are making the same coats you make now, at half the price."

I put my name down beneath Crossthwaite's, on the paper which he handed me, and went out with him.

"Ay," he muttered to himself, "be slaves—what you are worthy to be, that you will be! You dare not combine—you dare not starve—you dare not die—and therefore you dare not be free! Oh! for six hundred men like Barbaroux's Marseillois—'who knew how to die!'"

"Surely, Crossthwaite, if matters were properly represented to the government, they would not, for their own existence' sake, to put conscience out of the question, allow such a system to continue growing."

"Government—government? You a tailor, and not know that government are the very authors of this system? Not to know that they first set the example, by getting the army and navy clothes made by contractors, and taking the lowest tenders? Not to know that the police clothes, the postmen's clothes, the convicts' clothes, are all contracted for on the same infernal plan, by

sweaters, and sweaters' sweaters, and sweaters' sweaters' sweaters, till government work is just the very last, lowest resource to which a poor starved-out wretch betakes himself to keep body and soul together? Why, the government prices, in almost every department, are half, and less than half, the very lowest living price. I tell you, the careless iniquity of government about these things will come out some day. It will be known, the whole abomination, and future generations will class it with the tyrannies of the Roman emperors and the Norman barons. Why, it's a fact, that the colonels of the regiments—noblemen, most of them—make their own vile profit out of us tailors—out of the pauperism of the men, the slavery of the children, the prostitution of the women. They get so much a uniform allowed them by government to clothe the men with; and then—then, they let out the jobs to the contractors at less than half what government give them, and pocket the difference. And then you talk of appealing to government."

"Upon my word," I said, bitterly, "we tailors seem to owe the army a double grudge. They not only keep under other artizans, but they help to starve us first, and then shoot us, if we complain too loudly."

"Oh, ho! your blood's getting up, is it? Then you're in the humour to be told what you have been hankering to know so long—where Mackaye and I go at night. We'll strike while the iron's hot, and go down to the Chartist meeting at * * * * *

"Pardon me, my dear fellow," I said. "I cannot bear the thought of being mixed up in conspiracy—perhaps, in revolt and bloodshed. Not that I am afraid. Heaven knows I am not. But I am too much harassed, miserable, already. I see too much wretchedness around me, to lend my aid in increasing the sum of suffering, by a single atom, among rich and poor, even by righteous vengeance."

"Conspiracy? Bloodshed? What has that to do with the Charter? It suits the venal Mammonite press well enough to jumble them together, and cry 'Murder, rape, and robbery,' whenever the six points are mentioned; but they know, and any man of common sense ought to know,

that the Charter is just as much an open political question as the Reform Bill, and ten times as much as Magna Charter was, when it got passed. What have the six points, right or wrong, to do with the question whether they can be obtained by moral force, and the pressure of opinion alone, or require what we call ulterior measures to get them carried? Come along!"

So with him I went that night.

* * * * *

"Well, Alton! where was the treason and murder? Your nose must have been a sharp one, to smell out any there. Did you hear anything that astonished your weak mind so very exceedingly, after all?"

"The only thing that did astonish me was to hear men of my own class—and lower still, perhaps some of them—speak with such fluency and eloquence. Such a fund of information—such excellent English—where did they get it all?"

"From the God who knows nothing about ranks. They're the unknown great—the unaccredited heroes, as Master Thomas Carlyle would say—whom the flunkeys aloft have not acknowledged yet—though they'll be forced to, some day, with a vengeance. Are you convinced, once for all?"

"I really do not understand political questions, Crossthwaite."

"Does it want so very much wisdom to understand the rights and the wrongs of all that? Are the people represented? Are you represented? Do you feel like a man that's got any one to fight your battle in parliament, my young friend, eh?"

"I'm sure I don't know——"

"Why, what in the name of common sense—what interest or feeling of yours or mine, or any man's you ever spoke to, except the shopkeeper, do Alderman A—— or Lord C—— D—— represent? They represent property—and we have none. They represent rank—we have none. Vested interests—we have none. Large capitals—those are just what crush us. Irresponsibility of employers, slavery of the employed, competition

among masters, competition among workmen, that is the system they represent—they preach it, they glory in it.—Why, it is the very ogre that is eating us all up. They are chosen by the few, they represent the few, and they make laws for the many—and yet you don't know whether or not the people are represented!"

We were passing by the door of the Victoria Theatre; it was just half-price time—and the beggary and rascality of London were pouring in to their low amusement, from the neighbouring gin palaces and thieves' cellars. A herd of ragged boys, vomiting forth slang, filth, and blasphemy, pushed past us, compelling us to take good care of our pockets.

"Look there! look at the amusements, the training, the civilization, which the government permits to the children of the people!—These licensed pits of darkness, traps of temptation, profligacy, and ruin, triumphantly yawning night after night—and then tell me that the people who see their children thus kidnapped into hell are represented by a government who licenses such things!"

"Would a change in the franchise cure that?"

"Household suffrage mightn't—but give us the Charter, and we'll see about it! Give us the Charter, and we'll send workmen into parliament that shall soon find out whether something better can't be put in the way of the ten thousand boys and girls in London who live by theft and prostitution, than the tender mercies of the Victoria—a pretty name! They say the Queen's a good woman—and I don't doubt it. I wonder often if she knows what her precious namesake here is like."

"But really, I cannot see how a mere change in representation can cure such things as that."

"Why, didn't they tell us, before the Reform Bill, that extension of the suffrage was to cure everything? And how can you have too much of a good thing? We've only taken them at their word, we Chartists. Haven't all politicians been preaching for years that England's national greatness was all owing to her political institutions—to Magna Charta, and the Bill of Rights, and

representative parliaments, and all that? It was but the other day I got hold of some Tory paper, that talked about the English constitution, and the balance of queen, lords, and commons, as the 'Talismanic Palladium' of the country. 'Gad, we'll see if a move onward in the same line won't better the matter. If the balance of classes is such a blessed thing, the sooner we get the balance equal, the better; for it's rather lopsided just now, no one can deny. So, representative institutions are the talismanic palladium of the nation, are they? The palladium of the classes that have them, I dare say; and that's the very best reason why the classes that haven't got 'em should look out for the same palladium for themselves. What's sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose, isn't it? We'll try—we'll see whether the talisman they talk of has lost its power all of a sudden since '32—whether we can't rub the magic ring a little for ourselves and call up genii to help us out of the mire, as the shopkeepers and the gentlemen have done."

* * * * *

From that night I was a Chartist, heart and soul—and so were a million and a half more of the best artisans in England—at least, I had no reason to be ashamed of my company. Yes; I too, like Crossthwaite, took the upper classes at their word; bowed down to the idol of political institutions, and pinned my hopes of salvation on "the possession of one ten-thousandth part of a talker in the national palaver." True, I desired the Charter, at first (as I do, indeed, at this moment), as a means to glorious ends—not only because it would give a chance of elevation, a free sphere of action, to lowly worth and talent; but because it was the path to reforms—social, legal, sanatory, educational—to which the veriest Tory—certainly not the great and good Lord Ashley—would not object. But soon, with me, and I am afraid with many, many more, the means became, by the frailty of poor human nature, an end, an idol in itself. I had so made up my mind that it was the only method of getting what I wanted, that I neglected, alas! but too often, to try the methods which lay already by me. "If we

had but the Charter"—was the excuse for a thousand lazinesses, procrastinations. "If we had but the Charter" —I should be good, and free, and happy. Fool that I was! It was within, rather than without, that I needed reform.

And so I began to look on man (and too many of us, I am afraid, are doing so) as the creature and puppet of circumstances—of the particular outward system, social or political, in which he happens to find himself. An abominable heresy, no doubt; but, somehow, it appears to me just the same as Benthamites, and economists, and high-churchmen, too, for that matter, have been preaching for the last twenty years with great applause from their respective parties. One set informs the world that it is to be regenerated by cheap bread, free trade, and that peculiar form of the "freedom of industry" which, in plain language, signifies "the despotism of capital"; and which, whatever it means, is merely some outward system, circumstance, or "dodge" *about* man, and not *in* him. Another party's nostrum is more churches, more schools, more clergymen—excellent things in their way—better even than cheap bread, or free trade, provided only that they are excellent—that the churches, schools, clergymen, are good ones. But the party of whom I am speaking seem to us workmen to consider the quality quite a secondary consideration, compared with the quantity. They expect the world to be regenerated, not by becoming more a Church—none would gladlier help them in bringing that about than the Chartists themselves, paradoxical as it may seem—but by being dosed somewhat more with a certain "Church system," circumstance, or "dodge." For my part, I seem to have learnt that the only thing to regenerate the world is not more of any system, good or bad, but simply more of the Spirit of God.

About the supposed omnipotence of the Charter, I have found out my mistake. I believe no more in "Morison's-Pill-remedies," as Thomas Carlyle calls them. Talismans are worthless. The age of spirit-compelling spells, whether of parchment or carbuncle, is past—if, indeed,

it ever existed. The Charter will no more make men good, than political economy, or the observance of the Church Calendar—a fact which we working men, I really believe, have, under the pressure of wholesome defeat and God-sent affliction, found out sooner than our more "enlightened" fellow-idolaters. But at that time, as I have confessed already, we took our betters at their word, and believed in Morison's Pills. Only, as we looked at the world from among a class of facts somewhat different from theirs, we differed from them proportionably as to our notions of the proper ingredients in the said Pill.

* * * * *

But what became of our protest?

It was received—and disregarded. As for turning us off, we had, *de facto*, like Coriolanus, banished the Romans, turned our master off. All the other hands, some forty in number, submitted and took the yoke upon them, and went down into the house of bondage, knowing whither they went. Every man of them is now a beggar, compared with what he was then. Many are dead in the prime of life of consumption, bad food and lodging, and the peculiar diseases of our trade. Some have not been heard of lately—we fancy them imprisoned in some sweaters' dens—but thereby hangs a tale, whereof more hereafter.

But it was singular, that every one of the six who had merely professed their conditional readiness to sign the protest, were contumeliously discharged the next day, without any reason being assigned. It was evident that there had been a traitor at the meeting; and every one suspected Jemmy Downes, especially as he fell into the new system with suspiciously strange alacrity. But it was as impossible to prove the offence against him, as to punish him for it. Of that wretched man, too, and his subsequent career, I shall have somewhat to say hereafter. Verily, there is a God who judgeth the earth!

But now behold me and my now intimate and beloved friend, Crossthwaite, with nothing to do—a gentleman-like occupation; but, unfortunately, in our class, in-

volving starvation. What was to be done? We applied for work at several "honourable shops"; but at all we received the same answer. Their trade was decreasing —the public ran daily more and more to the cheap show-shops—and they themselves were forced, in order to compete with these latter, to put more and more of their work out at contract prices. *Facilis descensus Averni!* Having once been hustled out of the serried crowd of competing workmen, it was impossible to force our way in again. So, a week or ten days past, our little stocks of money were exhausted. I was down-hearted at once; but Crossthwaite bore up gaily enough.

"Katie and I can pick a crust together without snarling over it. And, thank God, I have no children, and never intend to have, if I can keep true to myself, till the good times come."

"Oh! Crossthwaite, are not children a blessing?"

"Would they be a blessing to me now? No, my lad.—Let those bring slaves into the world who will! I will never beget children to swell the numbers of those who are trampling each other down in the struggle for daily bread, to minister in ever deepening poverty and misery to the rich man's luxury—perhaps his lust."

"Then you believe in the Malthusian doctrines?"

"I believe them to be an infernal lie, Alton Locke; though good and wise people like Miss Martineau may sometimes be deluded into preaching them. I believe there's room on English soil for twice the number there is now; and when we get the Charter we'll prove it; we'll show that God meant living human heads and hands to be blessings and not curses, tools and not burdens. But in such times as these, let those who have wives be as though they had none—as St. Paul said, when he told his people under the Roman Emperor to be above begetting slaves and martyrs. A man of the people should keep himself as free from encumbrances as he can just now. He will find it all the more easy to dare and suffer for the people, when their turn comes——"

And he set his teeth firmly, almost savagely.

"I think I can earn a few shillings, now and then, by writing for a paper I know of. If that won't do, I must take up agitating for a trade, and live by spouting, as many a Tory member as well as Radical ones do. A man may do worse, for he may do nothing. At all events, my only chance now is to help on the Charter; for the sooner it comes the better for me. And if I die—why, the little woman won't be long in coming after me, I know that well; and there's a tough business got well over for both of us!"

"Hech," said Sandy,

"To every man
Death comes but once a life—

as my countryman, Mr. Macaulay, says, in thae gran' Roman ballants o' his. But for ye, Alton, laddie, ye're owre young to start off in the People's Church Meelitant, sae just bide wi' me, and the barrel o' meal in the corner there winna waste, nae mair than it did wi' the widow o' Zareptha; a tale which coincides sae weel wi' the everlasting righteousness, that I'm at times no inclined to consider it a'thegither mythical."

But I, with thankfulness which vented itself through my eyes, finding my lips alone too narrow for it, refused to eat the bread of idleness.

"Aweel, then, ye'll just mind the shop, and dust the books whiles; I'm getting auld and stiff, and ha' need o' help i' the business."

"No," I said; "you say so out of kindness; but if you can afford no greater comforts than these, you cannot afford to keep me in addition to yourself."

"Hech, then! How do ye ken that the auld Scot eats a' he makes? I was na born the spending side o' Tweed, my man. But gin ye daur, why dinna ye pack up your duds, and yer poems wi' them, and gang till your cousin i' the university? he'll surely put you in the way o' publishing them. He's bound to it by blude; and there's na shame in asking him to help you towards reaping the fruits o' yer ain labours. A few punds on a bond for repayment when the addition was sauld, noo,—I'd do that

for mysel; but I'm thinking ye'd better try to get a list o' subscribers. Dinna mind your independence; it's but spoiling the Egyptians, ye ken, and the bit ballants will be their money's worth, I'll warrant, and tell them a wheen facts they're no that weel acquentit wi'. Hech? Johnnie, my Chartist?"

"Why not go to my uncle?"

"Puir sugar-and-spice-selling bailie body! is there aught in his ledger about poetry, and the incommensurable value o' the products o' genius? Gang till the young scholar; he's a canny one, too, and he'll ken it to be worth his while to fash himsel a wee anent it."

So I packed up my little bundle, and lay awake all that night in a fever of expectation about the as yet unknown world of green fields and woods through which my road to Cambridge lay.

CHAPTER XI.

"THE YARD WHERE THE GENTLEMEN LIVE."

I MAY be forgiven, surely, if I run somewhat into detail about this my first visit to the country.

I had, as I have said before, literally never been further afield than Fulham or Battersea Rise. One Sunday evening, indeed, I had got as far as Wandsworth Common; but it was March, and, to my extreme disappointment, the heath was not in flower.

But, usually, my Sundays had been spent entirely in study; which to me was rest, so worn out were both my body and my mind with the incessant drudgery of my trade, and the slender fare to which I restricted myself. Since I had lodged with Mackaye certainly my food had been better. I had not required to stint my appetite for money wherewith to buy candles, ink, and pens. My wages, too, had increased with my years, and altogether I found myself gaining in strength, though I had no notion how much I possessed till I set forth on this walk to Cambridge.

It was a glorious morning at the end of May; and when I escaped from the pall of smoke which hung over the city, I found the sky a sheet of cloudless blue. How I watched for the ending of the rows of houses, which lined the road for miles—the great roots of London, running far out into the country, up which poured past me an endless stream of food and merchandise and human beings—the sap of the huge metropolitan life-tree! How each turn of the road opened a fresh line of terraces or villas, till hope deferred made the heart sick, and the

country seemed—like the place where the rainbow touches the ground, or the El Dorado of Raleigh's Guiana settler—always a little farther of! How between gaps in the houses, right and left, I caught tantalizing glimpses of green fields, shut from me by dull lines of high-spiked palings! How I peeped through gates and over fences at trim lawns and gardens, and longed to stay, and admire, and speculate on the name of the strange plants and gaudy flowers; and then hurried on, always expecting to find something still finer ahead—something really worth stopping to look at—till the houses thickened again into a street, and I found myself, to my disappointment, in the midst of a town! And then more villas and palings; and then a village;—when would they stop, those endless houses?

At last they did stop. Gradually the people whom I passed began to look more and more rural, and more toil-worn and ill-fed. The houses ended, cattle-yards and farm-buildings appeared; and right and left, far away, spread the low rolling sheet of green meadows and corn-fields. Oh, the joy! The lawns with their high elms and firs, the green hedgerows, the delicate hue and scent of the fresh clover-fields, the steep clay banks where I stopped to pick nosegays of wild flowers, and became again a child,—and then recollected my mother, and a walk with her on the river bank towards the Red House —and hurried on again, but could not be unhappy, while my eyes ranged free, for the first time in my life, over the chequered squares of cultivation, over glittering brooks, and hills quivering in the green haze, while above hung the skylarks, pouring out their souls in melody. And then, as the sun grew hot, and the larks dropped one by one into the growing corn, the new delight of the blessed silence! I listened to the stillness; for noise had been my native element; I had become in London quite unconscious of the ceaseless roar of the human sea, casting up mire and dirt. And now, for the first time in my life, the crushing, confusing hubbub had flowed away, and left my brain calm and free. How I felt at that moment a capability of clear, bright meditation, which was as new to me, as I believe it would have been to most Londoners

in my position. I cannot help fancying that our unnatural atmosphere of excitement, physical as well as moral, is to blame for very much of the working man's restlessness and fierceness. As it was, I felt that every step forward, every breath of fresh air, gave me new life. I had gone fifteen miles before I recollected that, for the first time for many months, I had not coughed since I rose.

So on I went, down the broad, bright road, which seemed to beckon me forward into the unknown expanses of human life.

> The world was all before me, where to choose,

and I saw it both with my eyes and my inagination, in the temper of a boy broke loose from school. My heart kept holiday. I loved and blessed the birds which flitted past me, and the cows which lay dreaming on the sward. I recollect stopping with delight at a picturesque descent into the road, to watch a nursery-garden, full of roses of every shade, from brilliant yellow to darkest purple; and as I wondered at the innumerable variety of beauties which man's art had developed from a few poor and wild species, it seemed to me the most delightful life on earth, to follow in such a place the primæval trade of gardener Adam; to study the secrets of the flower-world, the laws of soil and climate; to create new species, and gloat over the living fruit of one's own science and perseverance. And then I recollected the tailor's shop, and the Charter, and the starvation, and the oppression which I had left behind, and ashamed of my own selfishness, went hurrying on again.

At last I came to a wood—the first real wood that I had ever seen; not a mere party of stately park trees growing out of smooth turf, but a real wild copse; tangled branches and grey stems fallen across each other; deep, ragged underwood of shrubs, and great ferns like princes' feathers, and gay beds of flowers, blue and pink and yellow, with butterflies flitting about them, and trailers that climbed and dangled from bough to bough—a poor, commonplace bit of copse, I dare say, in the world's

eyes, but to me a fairy wilderness of beautiful forms, mysterious gleams and shadows, teeming with manifold life. As I stood looking wistfully over the gate, alternately at the inviting vista of the green-embroidered path, and then at the grim notice over my head, "All trespassers prosecuted," a young man came up the ride, dressed in velveteen jacket and leather gaiters, sufficiently bedrabbled with mud. A fishing-rod and basket bespoke him some sort of destroyer, and I saw in a moment that he was "a gentleman." After all, there is such a thing as looking like a gentleman. There are men whose class no dirt or rags could hide, any more than they could Ulysses. I have seen such men in plenty among workmen, too; but, on the whole, the gentlemen—by whom I do not mean just now the rich—have the superiority in that point. But not, please God, for ever. Give us the same air, water, exercise, education, good society, and you will see whether this "haggardness," this "coarseness," &c., &c., for the list is too long to specify, be an accident, or a property, of the man of the people.

"May I go into your wood?" asked I at a venture, curiosity conquering pride.

"Well! what do you want there, my good fellow?"

"To see what a wood is like—I never was in one in my life."

"Humph! well—you may go in for that, and welcome. Never was in a wood in his life—poor devil!"

"Thank you!" quoth I. And I slowly clambered over the gate. He put his hand carelessly on the top rail, vaulted over it like a deer, and then turned to stare at me.

"Hullo! I say—I forgot—don't go far in, or ramble up and down, or you'll disturb the pheasants."

I thanked him again for what license he had given me—went in, and lay down by the path-side.

Here, I suppose, by the rules of modern art, a picturesque description of the said wood should follow; but I am the most incompetent person in the world to write it. And, indeed, the whole scene was so novel to me, that I had no time to analyse; I could only enjoy. I recollect

lying on my face and fingering over the delicately cut leaves of the weeds, and wondering whether the people who lived in the country thought them as wonderful and beautiful as I did;—and then I recollected the thousands whom I had left behind, who, like me, had never seen the green face of God's earth; and the answer of the poor gamin in St. Giles's, who, when he was asked what the country was, answered, "*The yard where the gentlemen live when they go out of town*"—significant that, and pathetic;—then I wondered whether the time would ever come when society would be far enough advanced to open to even such as he a glimpse, if it were only once a year, of the fresh, clean face of God's earth;—and then I became aware of a soft mysterious hum, above and around me, and turned on my back to look whence it proceeded, and saw the leaves gold—green and transparent in the sunlight, quivering against the deep heights of the empyrean blue; and hanging in the sunbeams that pierced the foliage, a thousand insects, like specks of fire, that poised themselves motionless on thrilling wings, and darted away, and returned to hang motionless again;—and I wondered what they eat, and whether they thought about anything, and whether they enjoyed the sunlight;—and then that brought back to me the times when I used to lie dreaming in my crib on summer mornings, and watched the flies dancing reels between me and the ceilings;—and that again brought the thought of Susan and my mother; and I prayed for them—not sadly—I could not be sad there;—and prayed that we might all meet again some day and live happily together; perhaps in the country, where I could write poems in peace; and then, by degrees, my sentences and thoughts grew incoherent, and in happy, stupid animal comfort, I faded away into a heavy sleep, which lasted an hour or more, till I was awakened by the efforts of certain enterprising great black and red ants, who were trying to found a small Algeria in my left ear.

I rose and left the wood, and a gate or two on, stopped again to look at the same sportsman fishing in a clear

silver brook. I could not help admiring with a sort of childish wonder the graceful and practised aim with which he directed his tiny bait, and called up mysterious dimples on the surface, which in a moment increased to splashings and strugglings of a great fish, compelled, as if by some invisible spell, to follow the point of the bending rod till he lay panting on the bank. I confess, in spite of all my class prejudices against "game-preserving aristocrats," I almost envied the man; at least I seemed to understand a little of the universally attractive charms which those same outwardly contemptible field sports possess; the fresh air, fresh fields and copses, fresh running brooks, the exercise, the simple freedom, the excitement just sufficient to keep alive expectation and banish thought.—After all, his trout produced much the same mood in him as my turnpike-road did in me. And perhaps the man did not go fishing or shooting every day. The laws prevented him from shooting, at least, all the year round; so sometimes there might be something in which he made himself of use. An honest, jolly face too he had—not without thought and strength in it. "Well, it is a strange world," said I to myself, "where those who can, need not; and those who cannot, must!"

Then he came close to the gate, and I left it just in time to see a little group arrive at it—a woman of his own rank, young, pretty, and simply dressed, with a little boy, decked out as a Highlander, on a shaggy Shetland pony, which his mother, as I guessed her to be, was leading. And then they all met, and the little fellow held up a basket of provisions to his father, who kissed him across the gate, and hung his creel of fish behind the saddle, and patted the mother's shoulder, as she looked up lovingly and laughingly in his face. Altogether, a joyous, genial bit of——Nature? Yes, Nature. Shall I grudge simple happiness to the few, because it is as yet, alas! impossible for the many.

And yet the whole scene contrasted so painfully with me—with my past, my future, my dreams, my wrongs, that I could not look at it; and with a swelling heart I moved on—all the faster because I saw they were looking

at me and talking of me, and the fair wife threw after me a wistful, pitying glance, which I was afraid might develop itself into some offer of food or money—a thing which I scorned and dreaded, because it involved the trouble of a refusal.

Then, as I walked on once more, my heart smote me. If they had wished to be kind, why had I grudged them the opportunity of a good deed? At all events, I might have asked their advice. In a natural and harmonious state, when society really means brotherhood, a man could go up to any stranger, to give and receive, if not succour, yet still experience and wisdom: and was I not bound to tell them what I knew? was sure that they did not know? Was I not bound to preach the cause of my class wherever I went? Here were kindly people who, for aught I knew, would do right the moment they were told where it was wanted; if there was an accursed artificial gulf between their class and mine, had I any right to complain of it, as long as I helped to keep it up by my false pride and surly reserve? No! I would speak my mind henceforth—I would testify of what I saw and knew of the wrongs, if not of the rights of the artisan, before whomsoever I might come. Oh! valiant conclusion of half an hour's self-tormenting scruples! How I kept it, remains to be shown.

I really fear that I am getting somewhat trivial and prolix; but there was hardly an incident in my two days' tramp which did not give me some small fresh insight into the *terra incognita* of the country; and there may be those among my readers, to whom it is not uninteresting to look, for once, at even the smallest objects with a cockney workman's eyes.

Well, I trudged on—and the shadows lengthened, and I grew footsore and tired; but every step was new, and won me forward with fresh excitement for my curiosity.

At one village I met a crowd of little, noisy, happy boys and girls pouring out of a smart new Gothic schoolhouse. I could not resist the temptation of snatching a glance through the open door. I saw on the walls maps, music, charts, and pictures. How I envied those little

urchins! A solemn, sturdy elder, in a white cravat, evidently the parson of the parish, was patting children's heads, taking down names, and laying down the law to a shrewd, prim young schoolmaster.

Presently, as I went up the village, the clergyman strode past me, brandishing a thick stick and humming a chant, and joined a motherly-looking wife, who, basket on arm, was popping in and out of the cottages, looking alternately serious and funny, cross and kindly—I suppose, according to the sayings and doings of the folks within.

"Come," I thought, "this looks like work at least." And as I went out of the village, I accosted a labourer, who was trudging my way, fork on shoulder, and asked him if that was the parson and his wife?

I was surprised at the difficulty with which I got into conversation with the man; at his stupidity, feigned or real, I could not tell which; at the dogged, suspicious reserve with which he eyed me, and asked me whether I was "one of they parts"? and whether I was a Londoner, and what I wanted on the tramp, and so on, before he seemed to think it safe to answer a single question. He seemed, like almost every labourer I ever met, to have something on his mind; to live in a state of perpetual fear and concealment. When, however, he found I was both a cockney and a passer-by, he began to grow more communicative, and told me, "Ees—that were the parson, sure enough."

"And what sort of a man was he?"

"Oh! he was a main kind man to the poor; leastwise, in the matter of visiting 'em, and praying with 'em, and getting 'em to put into clubs, and such like; and his lady too. Not that there was any fault to find with the man about money—but 'twasn't to be expected of him."

"Why, was he not rich?"

"Oh, rich enough to the likes of us. But his own tithes here arn't more than a thirty pounds we hears tell; and if he hadn't summat of his own, he couldn't do not nothing by the poor; as it be, he pays for that ere school all to his own pocket, next part. All the rest o' the

tithes goes to some great lord or other—they say he draws a matter of a thousand a year out of the parish, and not a foot ever he sot into it; and that's the way with a main lot o' parishes, up and down."

This was quite a new fact to me. "And what sort of folks were the parsons all round."

"Oh, some of all sorts, good and bad. About six and half a dozen. There's two or three nice young gentlemen come'd round here now, but they're all what's-'em-a-call it?—some sort o' papishes;—leastwise, they has prayers in the church every day, and doesn't preach the Gospel, no how, I hears by my wife, and she knows all about it, along of going to meeting. Then there's one over there-away, as had to leave his living—he knows why. He got safe over seas. If he had been a poor man, he'd been in * * * * * gaol, safe enough, and soon enough. Then there's two or three as goes a-hunting—not as I sees no harm in that; if a man's got plenty of money, he ought to enjoy himself, in course: but still he can't be here and there too, to once. Then there's two or three as is bad in their healths, or thinks themselves so—or else has livings summer' else; and they lives summer' or others, and has curates. Main busy chaps is they curates, always, and wonderful hands to preach; but then, just as they gets a little knowing like at it, and folks gets to like 'em, and run to hear 'em, off they pops to summat better; and in course they're right to do so; and so we country-folks get nought but the young colts, afore they're broke, you see."

"And what sort of a preacher was his parson?"

"Oh, he preached very good Gospel, not that he went very often himself, acause he couldn't make out the meaning of it; he preached too high, like. But his wife said it was uncommon good Gospel; and surely when he come to visit a body, and talked plain English, like, not sermon-ways, he was a very pleasant man to heer, and his lady uncommon kind to nurse folk. They sot up with me and my wife, they two did, two whole nights, when we was in the fever, afore the officer could get us a nurse."

"Well," said I, "there are some good parsons left."

"Oh, yes; there's some very good ones—each one after his own way; and there'd be more on 'em, if they did but know how bad we labourers was off. Why bless ye, I mind when they was very different. A new parson is a mighty change for the better, mostwise, we finds. Why, when I was a boy, we never had no schooling. And now mine goes and learns singing and jobrafy, and ciphering, and sich like. Not that I sees no good in it. We was a sight better off in the old times, when there weren't no schooling. Schooling harn't made wages rise, nor preaching neither."

"But surely," I said, "all this religious knowledge ought to give you comfort, even if you are badly off."

"Oh! religion's all very well for them as has time for it; and a very good thing—we ought all to mind our latter end. But I don't see how a man can hear sermons with an empty belly; and there's so much to fret a man, now, and he's so cruel tired coming home o' nights, he can't nowise go to pray a lot, as gentlefolks does."

"But are you so ill off?"

"Oh! he'd had a good harvesting enough; but then he owed all that for he's rent; and he's club money wasn't paid up, nor he's shop. And then, with he's wages"—(I forget the sum—under ten shillings)—"how could a man keep his mouth full, when he had five children! And then, folks is so unmarciful—I'll just tell you what they says to me, now, last time I was over at the board——"

And thereon he rambled off into a long jumble of medical-officers, and relieving-officers, and Farmer This, and Squire That, which indicated a mind as ill-educated as discontented. He cursed or rather grumbled at—for he had not spirit, it seemed, to curse anything—the New Poor Law; because it "ate up the poor, flesh and bone"; —bemoaned the "Old Law," when "the Vestry was forced to give a man whatsomdever he axed for, and if they didn't, he'd go to the magistrates and make 'em, and so

sure as a man got a fresh child, he went and got another loaf allowed him next vestry, like a Christian;"—and so turned through a gate, and set to work forking up some weeds on a fallow, leaving me many new thoughts to digest.

That night, I got to some town or other, and there found a night's lodging, good enough for a walking traveller.

CHAPTER XII.

CAMBRIDGE.

WHEN I started again next morning, I found myself so stiff and footsore, that I could hardly put one leg before the other, much less walk upright. I was really quite in despair, before the end of the first mile; for I had no money to pay for a lift on the coach, and I knew, besides, that they would not be passing that way for several hours to come. So, with aching back and knees, I made shift to limp along, bent almost double, and ended by sitting down for a couple of hours, and looking about me, in a country which would have seemed dreary enough, I suppose, to any one but a freshly-liberated captive, such as I was. At last I got up and limped on, stiffer than ever from my rest, when a gig drove past me towards Cambridge, drawn by a stout cob, and driven by a tall, fat, jolly-looking farmer, who stared at me as he passed, went on, looked back, slackened his pace, looked back again, and at last came to a dead stop, and hailed me in a broad nasal dialect—

"Whor be ganging, then, boh?"

"To Cambridge."

"Thew'st na git there that gate. Be'est thee honest man?"

"I hope so," said I, somewhat indignantly.

"What's trade?"

"A tailor," I said.

"Tailor!—guide us! Tailor a-tramp? Barn't accoostomed to tramp, then?"

"I never was out of London before," said I, meekly—

for I was too worn-out to be cross—lengthy and impertinent as this cross-examination seemed.

"Oi'll gie thee lift; dee yow joomp in. Gae on, powney! Tailor, then! Oh! ah! tailor, saith he."

I obeyed most thankfully, and sat crouched together, looking up out of the corner of my eyes at the huge tower of broad-cloth by my side, and comparing the two red shoulders of mutton which held the reins, with my own wasted, white, woman-like fingers.

I found the old gentleman most inquisitive. He drew out of me all my story—questioned me about the way "Lunnon folks" lived, and whether they got ony shooting or "pattening"—whereby I found he meant skating—and broke in, every now and then, with ejaculations of childish wonder, and clumsy sympathy, on my accounts of London labour and London misery.

"Oh, father, father!—I wonders they bears it. Us'n in the fens wouldn't stand that likes. They'd roit, and roit, and roit, and tak' oot the dook-gunes to un—they would, as they did five-and-twenty year agone. Never to goo ayond the housen!—never to go ayond the housen! Kill me in a three months, that would—bor', then!"

"Are you a farmer?" I asked, at last, thinking that my turn for questioning was come.

"I bean't varmer; I be yooman born. Never paid rent in moy life, nor never wool. I farms my own land, and my vathers avore me, this ever so mony hoondred year. I've got the swoord of 'em to home, and the helmet that they fut with into the wars, then when they chopped off the king's head—what was the name of um?"

"Charles the First?"

"Ees—that's the booy. We was Parliament side—true Britons all we was, down into the fens, and Oliver Cromwell, as dug Botsham lode, to the head of us. Yow coom down to Metholl, and I'll shaw ye a country. I'll shaw 'ee some'at like bullocks to call, and some'at like a field o' beans—I wool,—none o' this here darned ups and downs o' hills" (though the country through which we drove was flat enough, I should have thought, to please any one), "to shake a body's

victuals out of his inwards—all so flat as a barn's floor, for vorty mile on end—there's the country to live in!—and vour sons—or was vour on 'em—every one on 'em fifteen stone in his shoes, to patten again' any man from Whit'sea Mere to Denver Sluice, for twenty pounds o' gold; and there's the money to lay down, and let the man as dare cover it, down with his money, and on wi' his pattens, thirteen-inch runners, down the wind, again' either a one o' the bairns!"

And he jingled in his pockets a heavy bag of gold, and winked, and chuckled, and then suddenly checking himself, repeated in a sad, dubious tone, two or three times, "Vour on 'em there was—vour on 'em there was;" and relieved his feelings by springing the pony into a canter till he came to a public-house, where he pulled up, called for a pot of hot ale, and insisted on treating me. I assured him that I never drank fermented liquors.

"Aw? Eh? How can yow do that then? Die o' cowd i' the fen, that gate, yow would. Love ye then! they as dinnot tak' spirits down thor, tak' their pennord o' elevation, then—women-folk especial."

"What's elevation?"

"Oh! ho! ho!—yow goo into druggist's shop o' market-day, into Cambridge, and you'll see the little boxes, doozens and doozens, a' ready on the counter; and never a ven-man's wife goo by, but what calls in for her pennord o' elevation, to last her out the week. Oh! ho! ho! Well, it keeps women-folk quiet, it do; and it's mortal good agin ago pains."

"But what is it?"

"Opium, bor' alive, opium!"

"But doesn't it ruin their health? I should think it the very worst sort of drunkenness."

"Ow, well, yow moi soy that—mak'th 'em cruel thin then, it do; but what can bodies do i' th' ago? Bot it's a bad thing, it is. Harken yow to me. Didst ever know one called Porter, to yowr trade?"

I thought a little, and recollected a man of that name, who had worked with us a year or two before—a great

friend of a certain scatter-brained Irish lad, brother of Crossthwaite's wife.

"Well, I did once, but I have lost sight of him twelve months, or more."

The old man faced sharp round on me, swinging the little gig almost over, and then twisted himself back again, and put on a true farmer-like look of dogged, stolid reserve. We rolled on a few minutes in silence.

"Dee yow consider, now, that a mon mought be lost, like, into Lunnon?"

"How lost?"

"Why, yow told o' they sweaters—dee yow think a mon might get in wi' one o' they, and they that mought be looking for un not to vind un?"

"I do, indeed. There was a friend of that man Porter got turned away from our shop, because he wouldn't pay some tyrannical fine for being saucy, as they called it, to the shopman; and he went to a sweater's—and then to another; and his friends have been tracking him up and down this six months, and can hear no news of him."

"Aw! guide us! And what'n, think yow, be gone wi' un?"

"I am afraid he has got into one of those dens, and has pawned his clothes, as dozens of them do, for food, and so can't get out."

"Pawned his clothes for victuals! To think o' that, noo! But if he had work, can't he get victuals?"

"Oh!" I said, "there's many a man who, after working seventeen or eighteen hours a day, Sundays and all, without even time to take off his clothes, finds himself brought in in debt to his tyrant at the week's end. And if he gets no work, the villain won't let him leave the house; he has to stay there starving on the chance of an hour's job. I tell you, I've known half a dozen men imprisoned in that way, in a little dungeon of a garret, where they had hardly room to stand upright, and only just space to sit and work between their beds, without breathing the fresh air, or seeing God's sun, for months together, with no victuals but a few slices of

bread-and-butter, and a little slop of tea, twice a day, till they were starved to the very bone."

"Oh, my God! my God!" said the old man, in a voice which had a deeper tone of feeling than mere sympathy with others' sorrow was likely to have produced. There was evidently something behind all these inquiries of his. I longed to ask him if his name, too, was not Porter.

"Aw yow knawn Billy Porter? What was a like? Tell me, now—what was a like, in the Lord's name! what was a like unto?"

"Very tall and bony," I answered.

"Ah! sax feet, and more? and a yard across?—but a was starved, a was a' thin, though, maybe, when yow sawn un?—and beautiful fine hair, hadn't a, like a lass's?"

"The man I knew had red hair," quoth I.

"Ow, ay, an' that it wor, red as a rising sun, and the curls of un like gowlden guineas! And thou knew'st Billy Porter! To think o' that, noo."—

Another long silence.

"Could you find un, dee yow think, noo, into Lunnon? Suppose, now, there was a mon 'ud gie—may be five pund—ten pund—twenty pund, by * * *—twenty pund down, for to ha' him brocht home safe and soun'—Could yow do't, bor'? I zay, could yow do't?"

"I could do it as well without the money as with, if I could do it at all. But have you no guess as to where he is?"

He shook his head sadly.

"We—that's to-zay, they as wants un—hav'n't heerd tell of un vor this three year—three year coom Whitsuntide as ever was—" And he wiped his eyes with his cuff.

"If you will tell me all about him, and where he was last heard of, I will do all I can to find him."

"Will ye, noo? will ye? The Lord bless ye for zaying that." And he grasped my hand in his great iron fist, and fairly burst out crying.

"Was he a relation of yours?" I asked, gently.

"My bairn—my bairn—my eldest bairn. Dinnot yow

ax me no moor—dinnot then, bor'. Gie on, yow powney, and yow goo leuk vor un."

Another long silence.

"I've a been to Lunnon, looking vor un."

Another silence.

"I went up and down, up and down, day and night, day and night, to all pot-houses as I could zee; vor, says I, he was a'ways a main chap to drink, he was. Oh, deery me! and I never cot zight on un—and noo I be most spent, I be."—

And he pulled up at another public-house, and tried this time a glass of brandy. He stopped, I really think, at every inn between that place and Cambridge, and at each tried some fresh compound; but his head seemed, from habit, utterly fire-proof.

At last, we neared Cambridge, and began to pass groups of gay horsemen, and then those strange caps and gowns—ugly and unmeaning remnant of obsolete fashion.

The old man insisted on driving me up to the gate of * * * College, and there dropped me, after I had given him my address, entreating me to "vind the bairn, and coom to zee him down to Metholl. But dinnot goo ax for Farmer Porter—they's all Porters there away. Yow ax for Wooden-house Bob—that's me; and if I barn't to home, ax for Mucky Billy—that's my brawther—we're all gotten our names down to ven; and if he barn't to home, yow ax for Frog-hall—that's where my sister do live; and they'll all veed ye, and lodge ye, and welcome come. We be all like one, doon in the ven; and do ye, do ye, vind my bairn!" And he trundled on, down the narrow street.

I was soon directed, by various smart-looking servants, to my cousin's rooms; and after a few mistakes, and wandering up and down noble courts and cloisters, swarming with gay young men, whose jaunty air and dress seemed strangely out of keeping with the stern antique solemnity of the Gothic buildings around, I espied my cousin's name over a door; and, uncertain how he might receive me, I gave a gentle, half-apologetic knock,

which was answered by a loud "Come in!" and I entered on a scene, even more incongruous than anything I had seen outside.

"If we can only keep away from Jesus as far as the corner, I don't care."

"If we don't run into that first Trinity before the willows, I shall care with a vengeance."

"If we don't it's a pity," said my cousin. "Wadham ran up by the side of that first Trinity yesterday, and he said that they were as well gruelled as so many posters, before they got to the stile."

This unintelligible, and to my inexperienced ears, irreverent conversation, proceeded from half a dozen powerful young men, in low-crowned sailors' hats and flannel trousers, some in striped jerseys, some in shooting-jackets, some smoking cigars, some beating up eggs in sherry; while my cousin, dressed like "a fancy waterman," sat on the back of a sofa, puffing away at a huge meerschaum.

"Alton! why, what wind on earth has blown you here?"

By the tone, the words seemed rather an inquiry as to what wind would be kind enough to blow me back again. But he recovered his self-possession in a moment.

"Delighted to see you! Where's your portmanteau? Oh—left it at the Bull! Ah! I see. Very well, we'll send the gyp for it in a minute, and order some luncheon. We're just going down to the boat-race. Sorry I can't stop, but we shall all be fined—not a moment to lose. I'll send you in luncheon as I go through the butteries; then, perhaps, you'd like to come down and see the race. Ask the gyp to tell you the way. Now, then, follow your noble captain, gentlemen—to glory and a supper." And he bustled out with his crew.

While I was staring about the room, at the jumble of Greek books, boxing-gloves, and luscious prints of pretty women, a shrewd-faced, smart man entered, much better dressed than myself.

"What would you like, sir? Ox-tail soup, sir, or gravy-soup, sir? Stilton cheese, sir, or Cheshire, sir? Old Stilton, sir, just now.

Fearing lest many words might betray my rank—and, strange to say, though I should not have been afraid of confessing myself an artisan before the "gentlemen" who had just left the room, I was ashamed to have my low estate discovered, and talked over with his compeers, by the flunkey who waited on them—I answered, "Anything—I really don't care," in as aristocratic and off-hand a tone as I could assume.

"Porter or ale, sir?"

"Water," without a "thank you," I am ashamed to say for I was not at that time quite sure whether it was well-bred to be civil to servants.

The man vanished, and reappeared with a savoury luncheon, silver forks, snowy napkins, smart plates—I felt really quite a gentleman.

He gave me full directions as to my "way to the boats, sir;" and I started out much refreshed; passed through back streets, dingy, dirty, and profligate-looking enough; out upon wide meadows, fringed with enormous elms; across a ferry; through a pleasant village, with its old grey church and spire; by the side of a sluggish river, alive with wherries. I had walked down some mile or so, and just as I heard a cannon, as I thought, fire at some distance, and wondered at its meaning, I came to a sudden bend of the river, with a church-tower hanging over the stream on the opposite bank, a knot of tall poplars, weeping willows, rich lawns, sloping down to the water's side, gay with bonnets and shawls; while, along the edge of the stream, light, gaudily-painted boats apparently waited for the race,—altogether the most brilliant and graceful group of scenery which I had beheld in my little travels. I stopped to gaze; and among the ladies on the lawn opposite, caught sight of a figure —my heart leapt into my mouth! Was it she at last? It was too far to distinguish features; the dress was altogether different—but was it not she? I saw her move across the lawn, and take the arm of a tall, venerable-looking man; and his dress was the same as that of the Dean, at the Dulwich Gallery—was it? was it not? To have found her, and a river between us! It was

ludicrously miserable—miserably ludicrous. Oh, that accursed river, which debarred me from certainty, from bliss! I would have plunged across—but there were three objections—first, that I could not swim; next, what could I do when I had crossed? and thirdly, it might not be she after all.

And yet I was certain—instinctively certain—that it was she, the idol of my imagination for years. If I could not see her features under that little white bonnet, I could imagine them there; they flashed up in my memory as fresh as ever. Did she remember my features, as I did hers? Would she know me again? Had she ever even thought of me, from that day to this? Fool! But there I stood, fascinated, gazing across the river, heedless of the racing-boats, and the crowd, and the roar that was rushing up to me at the rate of ten miles an hour, and in a moment more, had caught me, and swept me away with it, whether I would or not, along the towing-path, by the side of the foremost boats.

And yet, after a few moments, I ceased to wonder either at the Cambridge passion for boat-racing, or at the excitement of the spectators. "*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*" It was a noble sport—a sight such as could only be seen in England—some hundred of young men, who might, if they had chosen, been lounging effeminately about the streets, subjecting themselves voluntarily to that intense exertion, for the mere pleasure of toil. The true English stuff came out there; I felt that, in spite of all my prejudices—the stuff which has held Gibraltar and conquered at Waterloo—which has created a Birmingham and a Manchester, and colonized every quarter of the globe—that grim, earnest, stubborn energy, which, since the days of the old Romans, the English possess alone of all the nations of the earth. I was as proud of the gallant young fellows as if they had been my brothers—of their courage and endurance (for one could see that it was no child's-play, from the pale faces, and panting lips), their strength and activity, so fierce and yet so cultivated, smooth, harmonious, as oar kept time with oar, and every back rose and fell in concert—and felt my soul stirred up

to a sort of sweet madness, not merely by the shouts and cheers of the mob around me, but by the loud fierce pulse of the rowlocks, the swift whispering rush of the long snake-like eight oars, the swirl and gurgle of the water in their wake, the grim, breathless silence of the straining rowers. My blood boiled over, and fierce tears swelled into my eyes; for I, too, was a man, and an Englishman; and when I caught sight of my cousin, pulling stroke to the second boat in the long line, with set teeth and flashing eyes, the great muscles on his bare arms springing up into knots at every rapid stroke, I ran and shouted among the maddest and the foremost.

But I soon tired, and, footsore as I was, began to find my strength fail me. I tried to drop behind, but found it impossible in the press. At last, quite out of breath, I stopped; and instantly received a heavy blow from behind, which threw me on my face; and a fierce voice shouted in my ear, "Confound you, sir! don't you know better than to do that?" I looked up, and saw a man twice as big as myself sprawling over me, headlong down the bank, toward the river, whither I followed him, but alas! not on my feet, but rolling head over heels. On the very brink he stuck his heels into the turf, and stopped dead, amid a shout of, "Well saved, Lynedale!" I did not stop; but rolled into some two-feet water, amid the laughter and shouts of the men.

I scrambled out, and limped on, shaking with wet and pain, till I was stopped by a crowd which filled the towing-path. An eight-oar lay under the bank, and the men on shore were cheering and praising those in the boat for having "bumped," which word I already understood to mean, winning a race.

Among them, close to me, was the tall man who had upset me; and a very handsome, high-bred looking man he was. I tried to slip by, but he recognized me instantly, and spoke.

"I hope I didn't hurt you much. Really, when I spoke so sharply, I did not see that you were not a gownsman!"

The speech, as I suppose now, was meant courteously

enough. It indicated that though he might allow himself liberties with men of his own class, he was too well bred to do so with me. But in my anger I saw nothing but the words, "not a gownsman." Why should he see that I was not a gownsman? Because I was shabbier? —(and my clothes, over and above the ducking they had had, were shabby); or more plebeian in appearance (whatsoever that may mean)? or wanted something else, which the rest had about them, and I had not? Why should he know that I was not a gownsman? I did not wish, of course, to be a gentleman, and an aristocrat; but I was nettled, nevertheless, at not being mistaken for one; and answered, sharply enough—

"No matter whether I am hurt or not. It serves me right for getting among you cursed aristocrats."

"Box the cad's ears, Lord Lynedale," said a dirty fellow with a long pole—a cad himself, I should have thought.

"Let him go home and ask his mammy to hang him out to dry," said another.

The lord (for so I understood he was) looked at me with an air of surprise and amusement, which may have been good-natured enough in him, but did not increase the good-nature in me.

"Tut, tut, my good fellow. I really am very sorry for having upset you. Here's half-a-crown to cover damages."

"Better give it me than a muff like that," quoth he of the long pole; while I answered, surlily enough, that I wanted neither him nor his money, and burst through the crowd toward Cambridge. I was so shabby and plebeian, then, that people actually dare offer me money! Intolerable!

The reader may say that I was in a very unwholesome and unreasonable frame of mind.

So I was. And so would he have been in my place.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LOST IDOL FOUND.

On my return, I found my cousin already at home, in high spirits at having, as he informed me, "bumped the first Trinity." I excused myself for my dripping state, simply by saying that I had slipped into the river. To tell him the whole of the story, while the fancied insult still rankled fresh in me, was really too disagreeable both to my memory and my pride.

Then came the question, "What had brought me to Cambridge?" I told him all, and he seemed honestly to sympathize with my misfortunes.

"Never mind; we'll make it all right somehow. Those poems of yours—your must let me have them and look over them; and I dare say I shall persuade the governor to do something with them. After all, it's no loss for you; you couldn't have got on tailoring—much too sharp a fellow for that;—you ought to be at college, if one could only get you there. These sizarships, now, were meant for—just such cases as yours—clever fellows who could not afford to educate themselves; if we could only help you to one of them, now—

"You forget that in that case," said I, with something like a sigh, "I should have to become a member of the Church of England."

"Why, no; not exactly. Though, of course, if you want to get all out of the university which you ought to get, you must do so at last."

"And pretend to believe what I do not; for the sake

of deserting my own class, and pandering to the very aristocrats, whom—"

"Hullo!" and he jumped with a hoarse laugh. "Stop that till I see whether the door is sported. Why, you silly fellow, what harm have the aristocrats, as you call them, ever done you? Are they not doing you good at this moment? Are you not, by virtue of their aristocratic institutions, nearer having your poems published, your genius recognized, &c. &c., than ever you were before?"

"Aristocrats? Then you call yourself one?"

"No, Alton, my boy; not yet," said he quietly and knowingly. "Not yet: but I have chosen the right road, and shall end at the road's end; and I advise you—for really, as my cousin, I wish you all success, even for the mere credit of the family, to choose the same road likewise."

"What road?"

"Come up to Cambridge, by hook or by crook, and then take orders."

I laughed scornfully.

"My good cousin, it is the only method yet discovered for turning a snob (as I am, or was) into a gentleman; except putting him into a heavy cavalry regiment. My brother, who has no brains, preferred the latter method. I, who flatter myself that I have some, have taken the former." The thought was new and astonishing to me, and I looked at him in silence while he ran on—

"If you are once a parson, all is safe. Be you who you may before, from that moment you are a gentleman. No one will offer an insult. You are good enough for any man's society. You can dine at any nobleman's table. You can be friend, confidant, father confessor, if you like, to the highest women in the land; and if you have person, manners, and common sense, marry one of them into the bargain, Alton, my boy."

"And it is for that that you will sell your soul—to become a hanger-on of the upper classes, in sloth and luxury?"

"Sloth and luxury? Stuff and nonsense! I tell you that after I have taken orders, I shall have years and years of hard work before me; continual drudgery of serving tables, managing charities, visiting, preaching,

from morning till night, and after that often from night to morning again. Enough to wear out any but a tough constitution, as I trust mine is. Work, Alton, and hard work, is the only way now-a-days to rise in the Church, as in other professions. My father can buy me a living some day: but he can't buy me success, notoriety, social position, power—" and he stopped suddenly, as if he had been on the point of saying something more which should not have been said.

"And this," I said, "is your idea of a vocation for the sacred ministry? It is for this, that you, brought up a dissenter, have gone over to the Church of England?"

"And how do you know"—and his whole tone of voice changed instantly into what was meant, I suppose, for a gentle seriousness and reverent suavity—"that I am not a sincere member of the Church of England? How do you know that I may not have loftier plans and ideas, though I may not choose to parade them to everyone, and give that which is holy to the dogs?"

"I am the dog, then?" I asked, half amused, for I was too curious about his state of mind to be angry.

"Not at all, my dear fellow. But those great men to whom we (or at least I) owe our conversion to the true Church, always tell us (and you will feel yourself how right they are) not to parade religious feelings; to look upon them as sacred things, to be treated with that due reserve which springs from real reverence. You know, as well as I, whether that is the fashion of the body in which we were, alas! brought up. You know, as well as I, whether the religious conversation of that body has heightened your respect for sacred things."

"I do, too well." And I thought of Mr. Wigginton and my mother's tea parties.

"I dare say the vulgarity of that school has, ere now, shaken your faith in all that was holy?"

I was very near confessing that it had: but a feeling came over me, I knew not why, that my cousin would have been glad to get me into his power, and would therefore have welcomed a confession of infidelity. So I held my tongue.

"I can confess," he said, in the most confidential tone, "that it had for a time that effect on me. I have confessed it, ere now, and shall again and again, I trust. But I shudder to think of what I might have been believing or disbelieving now, if I had not in a happy hour fallen in with Mr. Newman's sermons, and learnt from them, and from his disciples, what the Church of England really was; not Protestant, no; but Catholic in the deepest and highest sense."

"So you are one of these new Tractarians? You do not seem to have adopted yet the ascetic mode of life, which I hear they praise up so highly."

"My dear Alton, if you have read, as you have, your Bible, you will recollect a text which tells you not to appear to men to fast. What I do or do not do in the way of self-denial, unless I were actually profligate, which I give you my sacred honour I am not, must be a matter between Heaven and myself."

There was no denying that truth; but the longer my cousin talked the less I trusted in him—I had almost said, the less I believed him. Ever since the tone of his voice had changed so suddenly, I liked him less than when he was honestly blurting out his coarse and selfish ambition. I do not think he was a hypocrite. I think he believed what he said, as strongly as he could believe anything. He proved afterwards that he did so, as far as man can judge man, by severe and diligent parish work: but I cannot help doubting at times, if that man ever knew what believing meant. God forgive him! In that, he is no worse than hundreds more who have never felt the burning and shining flame of intense conviction, of some truth rooted in the inmost recesses of the soul, by which a man must live, for which he would not fear to die.

And therefore I listened to him dully and carelessly; I did not care to bring objections, which arose thick and fast, to everything he said. He tried to assure me—and did so with a great deal of cleverness—that this Tractarian movement was not really an aristocratic, but a democratic one; that the Catholic Church had been in all

ages the Church of the poor; that the clergy were commissioned by Heaven to vindicate the rights of the people, and to stand between them and the tyranny of Mammon. I did not care to answer him that the "Catholic Church" had always been a Church of slaves, and not of free men; that the clergy had in every age been the enemies of light, of liberty; the oppressors of their flocks; and that to exalt a sacerdotal caste over other aristocracies, whether of birth or wealth, was merely to change our tyrants. When he told me that a clergyman of the Established Church, if he took up the cause of the working classes, might be the boldest and surest of all allies, just because, being established, and certain of his income, he cared not one sixpence what he said to any man alive, I did not care to answer him, as I might—And more shame upon the clergy that, having the safe vantage-ground which you describe, they dare not use it like men in a good cause, and speak their minds, if forsooth no one can stop them from so doing. In fact, I was distrustful, which I had a right to be, and envious also; but if I had a right to be that, I was certainly not wise, nor is any man, in exercising the said dangerous right as I did, and envying my cousin and every man in Cambridge.

But that evening, understanding that a boating supper, or some jubilation over my cousin's victory, was to take place in his rooms, I asked leave to absent myself—and I do not think my cousin felt much regret at giving me leave—and wandered up and down the King's Parade, watching the tall gables of King's College Chapel, and the classic front of the Senate House, and the stately tower of St. Mary's, as they stood, stern and silent, bathed in the still glory of the moonlight, and contrasting bitterly the lot of those who were educated under their shadow to the lot which had befallen me.*

"Noble buildings!" I said to myself, "and noble insti-

* It must be remembered that these impressions of, and comments on the universities, are not my own. They are simply what clever working men thought about them from 1845 to 1850; a period at which I had the fullest opportunities for knowing the thoughts of working men.

tutions! given freely to the people, by those who loved the people, and the Saviour who died for them. They gave us what they had, those mediæval founders: whatsoever narrowness of mind or superstition defiled their gift was not their fault, but the fault of their whole age. The best they knew they imparted freely, and God will reward them for it. To monopolize those institutions for the rich, as is done now, is to violate both the spirit and the letter of the foundations; to restrict their studies to the limits of middle-aged Romanism, their conditions of admission to those fixed at the Reformation, is but a shade less wrongful. The letter is kept—the spirit is thrown away. You refuse to admit any who are not members of the Church of England, say, rather, any who will not sign the dogmas of the Church of England, whether they believe a word of them or not. Useless formalism! which lets through the reckless, the profligate, the ignorant, the hypocritical: and only excludes the honest and the conscientious, and the mass of the intellectual working men. And whose fault is it that THEY are not members of the Church of England? Whose fault is it, I ask? Your predecessors neglected the lower orders, till they have ceased to reverence either you or your doctrines, you confess that, among yourselves, freely enough. You throw the blame of the present wide-spread dislike to the Church of England on her sins during 'the godless eighteenth century.' Be it so. Why are those sins to be visited on us? Why are we to be shut out from the universities, which were founded for us, because you have let us grow up, by millions, heathens and infidels, as you call us? Take away your subterfuge! It is not merely because we are bad churchmen that you exclude us, else you would be crowding your colleges, now, with the talented poor of the agricultural districts, who, as you say, remain faithful to the church of their fathers. But are there six labourers' sons educating in the universities at this moment! No! the real reason for our exclusion, churchmen or not, is, because we are *poor*—because we cannot pay your exorbitant fees, often, as in the case of

bachelors of arts, exacted for tuition which is never given, and residence which is not permitted—because we could not support the extravagance which you not only permit, but encourage—because by your own unblushing confession, it insures the university 'the support of the aristocracy.'"

"But, on religious points, at least, you must abide by the statutes of the university."

Strange argument, truly, to be urged literally by English Protestants in possession of Roman Catholic bequests! If that be true in the letter, as well as in the spirit, you should have given place long ago to the Dominicans and the Franciscans. In the spirit it is true, and the Reformers acted on it when they rightly converted the universities to the uses of the new faith. They carried out the spirit of the founders' statutes by making the universities as good as they could be, and letting them share in the new light of the Elizabethan age. But was the sum of knowledge, human and divine, perfected at the Reformation? Who gave the Reformers, or you, who call yourselves their representatives, a right to say to the mind of man, and to the teaching of God's Spirit, "Hitherto, and no farther"? Society and mankind, the children of the Supreme, will not stop growing for your dogmas—much less for your vested interests; and the righteous law of mingled development and renovation, applied in the sixteenth century, must be reapplied in the nineteenth; while the spirits of the founders, now purged from the superstitions and ignorances of their age, shall smile from heaven, and say, "So would we have had it, if we had lived in the great nineteenth century, into which it has been your privilege to be born."

But such thoughts soon passed away. The image which I had seen that afternoon upon the river banks had awakened imperiously the frantic longings of past years; and now it reascended its ancient throne, and tyrannously drove forth every other object, to keep me alone with its own tantalizing and torturing beauty. I did not think about her—No; I only stupidly and steadfastly stared at her with my whole soul and imagination, through that

long sleepless night; and, in spite of the fatigue of my journey, and the stiffness proceeding from my fall and wetting, I lay tossing till the early sun poured into my bedroom window. Then I arose, dressed myself, and went out to wander up and down the streets, gazing at one splendid building after another, till I found the gates of King's College open. I entered eagerly, through a porch which, to my untutored taste, seemed gorgeous enough to form the entrance to a fairy palace, and stood in the quadrangle, riveted to the spot by the magnificence of the huge chapel on the right.

If I had admired it the night before, I felt inclined to worship it this morning, as I saw the lofty buttresses and spires, fretted with all their gorgeous carving, and "storied windows richly dight," sleeping in the glare of the newly-risen sun, and throwing their long shadows due westward down the sloping lawn, and across the river which dimpled and gleamed below, till it was lost among the towering masses of crisp elms and rose-garlanded chestnuts in the rich gardens beyond.

Was I delighted? Yes—and yet no. There is a painful feeling in seeing anything magnificent which one cannot understand. And perhaps it was a morbid sensitiveness, but the feeling was strong upon me that I was an interloper there—out of harmony with the scene and the system which had created it; that I might be an object of unpleasant curiosity, perhaps of scorn (for I had not forgotten the nobleman at the boat-race), amid those monuments of learned luxury. Perhaps, on the other hand, it was only from the instinct which makes us seek for solitude under the pressure of intense emotions, when we have neither language to express them to ourselves, nor loved one in whose silent eyes we may read kindred feelings—a sympathy which wants no words. Whatever the cause was, when a party of men, in their caps and gowns, approached me down the dark avenue which led into the country, I was glad to shrink for concealment behind the weeping-willow at the foot of the bridge, and slink off unobserved to breakfast with my cousin.

We had just finished breakfast, my cousin was lighting

his meerschaum, when a tall figure passed the window, and the taller of the noblemen, whom I had seen at the boat-race, entered the room with a packet of papers in his hand.

"Here, Locule mi! my pocket-book—or rather, to stretch a bad pun till it bursts, my pocket-dictionary—I require the aid of your benevolently-squandered talents for the correction of these proofs. I am, as usual, both idle and busy this morning; so draw pen, and set to work for me."

"I am exceedingly sorry, my lord," answered George, in his most obsequious tone, "but I must work this morning with all my might. Last night, recollect, was given to triumph, Bacchus, and idleness."

"Then find some one who will do them for me, my Ulysses polumechane, polutrope, panurge."

"I shall be most happy (with a half-frown and a wince) to play Panurge to your lordship's Pantagruel, on board the new yacht."

"Oh, I am perfect in that character, I suppose? And is she after all, like Pantagruel's ship, to be loaded with hemp? Well, we must try two or three milder cargoes first. But come, find me some starving genius—some græculus esuriens——"

"Who will ascend to the heaven of your lordship's eloquence for the bidding?"

"Five shillings a sheet—there will be about two of them, I think, in the pamphlet."

"May I take the liberty of recommending my cousin here?"

"Your cousin?" And he turned to me, who had been examining with a sad and envious eye the contents of the bookshelves. Our eyes met, and first a faint blush, and then a smile of recognition, passed over his magnificent countenance.

"I think I had—I am ashamed that I cannot say the pleasure, of meeting him at the boat race yesterday."

My cousin looked inquiringly and vexed at us both. The nobleman smiled.

"Oh, the fault was mine, not his."

"I cannot think," I answered, "that you have any reasons to remember with shame your own kindness and courtesy. As for me," I went on bitterly, "I suppose a poor journeyman tailor, who ventures to look on at the sports of gentlemen, only deserves to be run over."

"Sir," he said, looking at me with a severe and searching glance, "your bitterness is pardonable—but not your sneer. You do not yourself think what you say, and you ought to know that I think it still less than yourself. If you intend your irony to be useful, you should keep it till you can use it courageously against the true offenders."

I looked up at him fiercely enough, but the placid smile which had returned to his face disarmed me.

"Your class," he went on, "blind yourselves and our class as much by wholesale denunciations of us, as we, alas! who should know better, do by wholesale denunciations of you. As you grow older, you will learn that there are exceptions to every rule."

"And yet the exception proves the rule."

"Most painfully true, sir. But that argument is two-edged. For instance, am I to consider it the exception or the rule, when I am told that you, a journeyman tailor, are able to correct these proofs for me?"

"Nearer the rule, I think, than you yet fancy."

"You speak out boldly and well; but how can you judge what I may please to fancy? At all events, I will make trial of you. There are the proofs. Bring them to me by four o'clock this afternoon, and if they are well done, I will pay you more than I should do to the average hack-writer, for you will deserve more."

I took the proofs; he turned to go, and by a side-look at George beckoned him out of the room. I heard a whispering in the passage; and I do not deny that my heart beat high with new hopes, as I caught unwillingly the words—

"Such a forehead!—such an eye!—such a contour of feature as that!—Locule mi—that boy ought not to be mending trousers."

My cousin returned, half laughing, half angry.

"Alton, you fool, why did you let out that you were a snip?"

"I am not ashamed of my trade."

"I am, then. However, you've done with it now; and if you can't come the gentleman, you may as well come the rising genius. The self-educated dodge pays well just now; and after all, you've hooked his lordship—thank me for that. But you'll never hold him, you impudent dog, if you pull so hard on him"—He went on, putting his hands into his coat-tail pockets, and sticking himself in front of the fire, like the Delphic Pythoness upon the sacred tripod, in hopes, I suppose, of some oracular afflatus—"You will never hold him, I say, if you pull so hard on him. You ought to 'My lord' him for months yet, at least. You know, my good fellow, you must take every possible care to pick up what good breeding you can, if I take the trouble to put you in the way of good society, and tell you where my private birds'-nests are, like the green schoolboy some poet or other talks of."

"He is no lord of mine," I answered, "in any sense of the word, and therefore I shall not call him so."

"Upon my honour! here is a young gentleman who intends to rise in the world, and then commences by trying to walk through the first post he meets! Noodle! can't you do like me, and get out of the carts' way when they come by? If you intend to go ahead, you must just dodge in and out like a dog at a fair. 'She stoops to conquer' is my motto, and a precious good one too."

"I have no wish to conquer Lord Lynedale, and so I shall not stoop to him."

"I have, then; and to very good purpose, too. I am his whetstone, for polishing up that classical wit of his on, till he carries it into Parliament to astonish the country squires. He fancies himself a second Goethe, I hav'n't forgot his hitting at me, before a large supper party, with a certain epigram of that old turkeycock's about the whale having his unmentionable parasite—and the great man likewise. Whale, indeed! I bide my time, Alton, my boy—I bide my time; and then let your

grand aristocrat look out! If he does not find the supposed whale-unmentionable a good stout holding harpoon, with a tough line to it, and a long one, it's a pity, Alton my boy!"

And he burst into a coarse laugh, tossed himself down on the sofa, and re-lighted his meerschaum.

"He seemed to me," I answered, "to have a peculiar courtesy and liberality of mind towards those below him in rank."

"Oh! he had, had he? Now, I'll just put you up to a dodge. He intends to come the Mirabeau—fancies his mantle has fallen on him—prays before the fellow's bust, I believe, if one knew the truth, for a double portion of his spirit; and therefore it is a part of his game to ingratiate himself with all pot-boy-dom, while at heart he is as proud, exclusive an aristocrat, as ever wore nobleman's hat. At all events, you may get something out of him, if you play your cards well—or, rather, help me to play mine; for I consider him as my property, and you only as my aide-de-camp."

"I shall play no one's cards," I answered, sulkily. "I am doing work fairly, and shall be fairly paid for it, and keep my own independence."

"Independence—hey-day! Have you forgotten that, after all, you are my—guest, to call it by the mildest term?"

"Do you upbraid me with that?" I said, starting up. "Do you expect me to live on your charity, on condition of doing your dirty work? You do not know me, sir. I leave your roof this instant!"

"You do not!" answered he, laughing loudly, as he sprang over the sofa, and set his back against the door. "Come, come, you Will-o'-the-Wisp, as full of flights, and fancies, and vagaries, as a sick old maid! can't you see which side your bread is buttered? Sit down, I say! Don't you know that I'm as good-natured a fellow as ever lived, although I do parade a little Gil Blas morality now and then, just for fun's sake? Do you think I should be so open with it, if I meant anything very diabolic? There—sit down, and don't go into King

Cambyses' vein, or Queen Hecuba's tears either, which you seem inclined to do."

"I know you have been very generous to me," I said, penitently; "but a kindness becomes none when you are upbraided with it."

"So say the copybooks—I deny it. At all events, I'll say no more; and you shall sit down there, and write as still as a mouse till two, while I tackle this never-to-be-enough-by-unhappy-third-years'-men-execrated Griffin's Optics."

* * * * *

At four that afternoon, I knocked, proofs in hand, at the door of Lord Lynedale's rooms in the King's Parade. The door was opened by a little elderly groom, grey-coated, grey-gaitered, grey-haired, grey-visaged. He had the look of a respectable old family retainer, and his exquisitely neat groom's dress gave him a sort of interest in my eyes. Class costumes, relics though they are of feudalism, carry a charm with them. They are symbolic, definitive; they bestow a personality on the wearer, which satisfies the mind, by enabling it instantly to classify him, to connect him with a thousand stories and associations; and to my young mind, the wiry, shrewd, honest, grim old serving-man seemed the incarnation of all the wonders of Newmarket, and the hunting-kennel, and the steeple-chase, of which I had read, with alternate admiration and contempt, in the newspapers. He ushered me in with a good breeding which surprised me;—without insolence to me, or servility to his master; both of which I had been taught to expect.

Lord Lynedale bade me very courteously sit down while he examined the proofs. I looked round the low-wainscoted apartment, with its narrow mullioned windows, in extreme curiosity. What a real nobleman's abode could be like, was naturally worth examining, to one who had, all his life, heard of the aristocracy as of some mythic Titans—whether fiends or gods, being yet a doubtful point—altogether enshrined on "cloudy Olympus," invisible to mortal ken. The shelves were gay with morocco, Russia leather, and gilding—not much

used, as I thought, till my eye caught one of the gorgeously-bound volumes lying on the table in a loose cover of polished leather—a refinement of which poor I should never have dreamt. The walls were covered with prints, which soon turned my eyes from everything else, to range delighted over Landseers, Turners, Roberts's Eastern sketches, the ancient Italian masters; and I recognized, with a sort of friendly affection, an old print of my favourite St. Sebastian, in the Dulwich Gallery. It brought back to my mind a thousand dreams, and a thousand sorrows. Would those dreams be ever realized? Might this new acquaintance possibly open some pathway towards their fulfilment?—some vista towards the attainment of a station where they would, at least, be less chimerical? And at that thought, my heart beat loud with hope. The room was choked up with chairs and tables, of all sorts of strange shapes and problematical uses. The floor was strewed with skins of bear, deer, and seal. In a corner lay hunting-whips, and fishing-rods, foils, boxing-gloves, and gun-cases; while over the chimney-piece, an array of rich Turkish pipes, all amber and enamel, contrasted curiously with quaint old swords and daggers—bronze classic casts, upon Gothic oak brackets, and fantastic scraps of continental carving. On the centre table, too, reigned the same rich profusion, or if you will, confusion—MSS., "Notes in Egypt," "Goethe's Walverwandschaften," Murray's Hand-books, and "Plato's Republic." What was there not there? And I chuckled inwardly, to see how *Bell's Life in London* and the *Ecclesiologist* had, between then, got down "McCulloch on Taxation," and were sitting, arm-in-arm, triumphantly astride of him. Everything in the room, even to the fragrant flowers in a German glass, spoke of a travelled and cultivated luxury—manifold tastes and powers of self-enjoyment and self-improvement, which, Heaven forgive me if I envied, as I looked upon them. If I, now, had had one-twentieth part of those books, prints, that experience of life, not to mention that physical strength and beauty, which stood towering there before the fire—so simple, so utterly unconscious of the innate

nobleness and grace which shone out from every motion of those stately limbs and features—all the delicacy which blood can give, combined, as one does sometimes see, with the broad strength of the proletarian—so different from poor me!—and so different, too, as I recollected with perhaps a savage pleasure, from the miserable, stunted specimens of over-bred imbecility whom I had often passed in London! A strange question that of birth! and one in which the philosopher, in spite of himself, must come to democratic conclusions. For, after all, the physical and intellectual superiority of the high-born is only preserved, as it was in the old Norman times, by the continual practical abnegation of the very caste-lie on which they pride themselves—by continual renovation of their race, by intermarriage with the ranks below them. The blood of Odin flowed in the veins of Norman William; true—and so did the tanner's of Falaise!

At last he looked up and spoke courteously—

"I'm afraid I have kept you long; but now, here is for your corrections, which are capital. I have really to thank you for a lesson in writing English." And he put a sovereign into my hand.

"I am very sorry," said I, "but I have no change."

"Never mind that. Your work is well worth the money."

"But," I said, "you agreed with me for five shillings a sheet, and——I do not wish to be rude, but I cannot accept your kindness. We working men make a rule of abiding by our wages, and taking nothing which looks like——"

"Well, well—and a very good rule it is. I suppose, then, I must find out some way for you to earn more. Good afternoon." And he motioned me out of the room, followed me down stairs, and turned off towards the College Gardens.

I wandered up and down, feeding my greedy eyes, till I found myself again upon the bridge where I had stood that morning, gazing with admiration and astonishment at a scene which I have often expected to see painted or described, and which, nevertheless, in spite of its unique

magnificence, seems strangely overlooked by those who cater for the public taste, with pen and pencil. The vista of bridges, one after another spanning the stream; the long line of great monastic palaces, all unlike, and yet all in harmony, sloping down to the stream, with their trim lawns and ivied walls, their towers and buttresses; and opposite them, the range of rich gardens and noble timber-trees, dimly seen through which, at the end of the gorgeous river avenue, towered the lofty buildings of St. John's. The whole scene, under the glow of a rich May afternoon, seemed to me a fragment out of the "Arabian Nights" or Spencer's "Fairy Queen." I leaned upon the parapet, and gazed, and gazed, so absorbed in wonder and enjoyment, that I was quite unconscious, for some time, that Lord Lynedale was standing by my side, engaged in the same employment. He was not alone. Hanging on his arm was a lady, whose face, it seemed to me, I ought to know. It certainly was one not to be easily forgotten. She was beautiful, but with the face and figure rather of a Juno than a Venus—dark, imperious, restless—the lips almost too firmly set, the brow almost too massive and projecting—a queen, rather to be feared than loved—but a queen still, as truly royal as the man into whose face she was looking up with eager admiration and delight, as he pointed out to her eloquently the several beauties of the landscape. Her dress was as plain as that of any Quaker; but the grace of its arrangement, of every line and fold, was enough, without the help of the heavy gold bracelet on her wrist, to proclaim her a fine lady; by which term, I wish to express the result of that perfect education in taste and manner, down to every gesture, which Heaven forbid that I, professing to be a poet, should undervalue. It is beautiful; and therefore I welcome it, in the name of the Author of all beauty. I value it so highly, that I would fain see it extend, not merely from Belgravia to the tradesman's villa, but thence, as I believe it one day will, to the labourer's hovel, and the needlewoman's garret.

Half in bashfulness, half in the pride which shrinks from anything like intrusion, I was moving away; but the nobleman, recognising me with a smile and a nod,

made some observation on the beauty of the scene before us. Before I could answer, however, I saw that his companion's eyes were fixed intently on my face.

"Is this," she said to Lord Lynedale, "the young person of whom you were speaking to me just now? I fancy that I recollect him, though, I dare say, he has forgotten me."

If I had forgotten the face, that voice, so peculiarly rich, deep, and marked in its pronunciation of every syllable, recalled her instantly to my mind. It was the dark lady of the Dulwich Gallery!

"I met you, I think," I said, "at the picture gallery at Dulwich, and you were kind enough, and——and some persons who were with you, to talk to me about a picture there."

"Yes; Guido's St. Sebastian. You seemed fond of reading then. I am glad to see you at college."

I explained that I was not at college. That led to fresh gentle questions on her part, till I had given her all the leading points of my history. There was nothing in it of which I ought to have been ashamed.

She seemed to become more and more interested in my story, and her companion also.

"And have you tried to write? I recollect my uncle advising you to try a poem on St. Sebastian. It was [illegible]en, perhaps, in jest; but it will not, I hope, have been labour lost, if you have taken it in earnest."

"Yes—I have written on that and on other subjects, during the last few years."

"Then, you must let us see them, if you have them with you. I think my uncle, Arthur, might like to look over them; and if they were fit for publication, he might be able to do something towards it."

"At all events," said Lord Lynedale, "a self-educated author is always interesting. Bring any of your poems, that you have with you, to the Eagle this afternoon, and leave them there for Dean Winnstay; and to-morrow morning, if you have nothing better to do, call there between ten and eleven o'clock."

He wrote me down the dean's address, and nodding a

civil good morning, turned away with his queenly companion, while I stood gazing after him, wondering whether all noblemen and high-born ladies were like them in person and in spirit—a question which, in spite of many noble exceptions, some of them well known and appreciated by the working men, I am afraid must be answered in the negative.

I took my MSS. to the Eagle, and wandered out once more, instinctively, among those same magnificent trees at the back of the colleges, to enjoy the pleasing torment of expectation. "My uncle!" was he the same old man whom I had seen at the gallery; and if so, was Lillian with him? Delicious hope! And yet, what if she was with him—what to me? But yet I sat silent, dreaming, all the evening, and hurried early to bed—not to sleep, but to lie and dream on and on, and rise almost before light, eat no breakfast, and pace up and down, waiting impatiently for the hour at which I was to find out whether my dream was true.

And it was true! The first object I saw, when I entered the room, was Lillian, looking more beautiful than ever. The child of sixteen had blossomed into the woman of twenty. The ivory and vermilion of the complexion had toned down together into still richer hues. The dark hazel eyes shone with a more liquid lustre. The figure had become more rounded, without losing a line of that fairy lightness, with which her light morning-dress, with its delicate French semi-tones of colour, gay and yet not gaudy, seemed to harmonize. The little plump jewelled hands—the transparent chestnut hair, banded round the beautiful oval masque—the tiny feet, which, as Suckling has it,

> Underneath her petticoat
> Like little mice peeped in and out——

I could have fallen down, fool that I was! and worshipped——what? I could not tell then, for I cannot tell even now.

The dean smiled recognition, bade me sit down, and disposed my papers, meditatively, on his knee. I obeyed

him, trembling, choking—my eyes devouring my idol—forgetting why I had come—seeing nothing but her—listening for nothing but the opening of these lips. I believe the dean was some sentences deep in his oration, before I became conscious thereof.

"—— And I think I may tell you, at once, that I have been very much surprised and gratified with them. They evince, on the whole, a far greater acquaintance with the English classic-models, and with the laws of rhyme and melody, than could have been expected from a young man of your class—*macte virtute puer*. Have you read any Latin?"

"A little." And I went on staring at Lillian, who looked up, furtively, from her work, every now and then, to steal a glance at me, and set my poor heart thumping still more fiercely against my side.

"Very good; you will have the less trouble, then, in the preparation for college. You will find out for yourself, of course, the immense disadvantages of self-education. The fact is, my dear lord" (turning to Lord Lynedale), "it is only useful as an indication of a capability of being educated by others. One never opens a book written by working men, without shuddering at a hundred faults of style. However, there are some very tolerable attempts among these—especially the imitations of Milton's 'Comus.'"

Poor I had by no means intended them as imitations; but such, no doubt, they were.

"I am sorry to see that Shelley has had so much influence on your writing. He is a guide as irregular in taste, as unorthodox in doctrine; though there are some pretty things in him now and then. And you have caught his melody tolerably here, now——"

"Oh, that is such a sweet thing!" said Lillian. "Do you know, I read it over and over last night, and took it up-stairs with me. How very fond of beautiful things you must be, Mr. Locke, to be able to describe so passionately the longing after them."

That voice once more! It intoxicated me, so that I hardly knew what I stammered out—something about

working men having very few opportunities of indulging the taste for—I forget what. I believe I was on the point of running off into some absurd compliment, but I caught the dark lady's warning eye on me.

"Ah, yes! I forgot. I dare say it must be a very stupid life. So little opportunity, as he says. What a pity he is a tailor, papa! Such an unimaginative employment! How delightful it would be to send him to college and make him a clergyman!"

Fool that I was! I fancied—what did I not fancy?—never seeing how that very "*he*" bespoke the indifference—the gulf between us. I was not a man—an equal; but a thing—a subject, who was to be talked over, and examined, and made into something like themselves, of their supreme and undeserved benevolence.

"Gently, gently, fair lady! We must not be as headlong as some people would kindly wish to be. If this young man really has a proper desire to rise into a higher station, and I find him a fit object to be assisted in that praiseworthy ambition, why, I think he ought to go to some training college; St. Mark's, I should say, on the whole, might, by its strong Church principles, give the best antidote to any little remaining taint of *sans-culottism*. You understand me, my lord? And, then, if he distinguished himself there, it would be time to think of getting him a sizarship."

"Poor Pegasus in harness!" half smiled, half sighed, the dark lady.

"Just the sort of youth," whispered Lord Lynedale, loud enough for me to hear, "to take out with us to the Mediterranean as secretary—s'il y avait là de la morale, of course—"

Yes—and of course, too, the tailor's boy was not expected to understand French. But the most absurd thing was, how everybody, except perhaps the dark lady, seemed to take for granted that I felt myself exceedingly honoured, and must consider it, as a matter of course, the greatest possible stretch of kindness thus to talk me over, and settle everything for me, as if I was not a living soul, but a plant in a pot. Perhaps they were not unsupported

by experience. I suppose too many of us would have thought it so; there are flunkeys in all ranks, and to spare. Perhaps the true absurdity was the way in which I sat, demented, inarticulate, staring at Lillian, and only caring for any word which seemed to augur a chance of seeing her again; instead of saying, as I felt, that I had no wish whatever to rise above my station; no intention whatever of being sent to training schools or colleges, or anywhere else at the expense of other people. And therefore it was that I submitted blindly, when the dean, who looked as kind, and was really, I believe, as kind as ever was human being, turned to me with a solemn authoritative voice—

"Well, my young friend, I must say that I am, on the whole, very much pleased with your performance. It corroborates, my dear lord, the assertion, for which I have been so often ridiculed, that there are many real men, capable of higher things, scattered up and down among the masses. Attend to me, sir!" (a hint which I suspect I very much wanted). "Now, recollect; if it should be hereafter in our power to assist your prospects in life, you must give up, once and for all, the bitter tone against the higher classes, which I am sorry to see in your MSS. As you know more of the world, you will find that the poor are not by any means as ill used as they are taught, in these days, to believe. The rich have their sorrows too—no one knows it better than I"—(and he played pensively with his gold pencil-case)—"and good and evil are pretty equally distributed among all ranks, by a just and merciful God. I advise you most earnestly, as you value your future success in life, to give up reading those unprincipled authors, whose aim is to excite the evil passions of the multitude; and to shut your ears betimes to the extravagant calumnies of demagogues, who make tools of enthusiastic and imaginative minds for their own selfish aggrandisement. Avoid politics; the workman has no more to do with them than the clergyman. We are told, on divine authority, to fear God and the king, and meddle not with those who are given to change. Rather put before yourself the example of such

a man as the excellent Dr. Brown, one of the richest and most respected men of the university, with whom I hope to have the pleasure of dining this evening—and yet that man actually, for several years of his life, worked at a carpenter's bench!"

I too had something to say about all that. I too knew something about demagogues and working men: but the sight of Lillian made me a coward; and I only sat silent as the thought flashed across me, half ludicrous, half painful, by its contrast, of another who once worked at a carpenter's bench, and fulfilled his mission—not by an old age of wealth, respectability, and port wine; but on the Cross of Calvary. After all, the worthy old gentleman gave me no time to answer.

"Next—I think of showing these MSS. to my publisher, to get his opinion as to whether they are worth printing just now. Not that I wish you to build much on the chance. It is not necessary that you should be a poet. I should prefer mathematics for you, as a methodic discipline of the intellect. Most active minds write poetry, at a certain age—I wrote a good deal, I recollect, myself. But that is no reason for publishing. This haste to rush into print is one of the bad signs of the times—a symptom of the unhealthy activity which was first called out by the French revolution. In the Elizabethan age, every decently-educated gentleman was able, as a matter of course, to indite a sonnet to his mistress's eye-brow, or an epigram on his enemy; and yet he never dreamt of printing them. One of the few rational things I have met with, Eleanor, in the works of your very objectionable pet Mr. Carlyle—though indeed his style is too intolerable to have allowed me to read much—is the remark that 'speech is silver'—'silvern' he calls it, pedantically—'while silence is golden.'"

At this point of the sermon, Lillian fled from the room, to my extreme disgust. But still the old man prosed—

"I think, therefore, that you had better stay with your cousin for the next week. I hear from Lord Lynedale that he is a very studious, moral, rising young man; and I only hope that you will follow his good example. At

the end of the week I shall return home, and then I shall be glad to see more of you at my house at D * * * *, about * * * * miles from this place. Good morning."

I went, in rapture at the last announcement—and yet my conscience smote me. I had not stood up for the working men. I had heard them calumniated, and held my tongue—but I was to see Lillian. I had let the dean fancy I was willing to become a pensioner on his bounty—that I was a member of the Church of England, and willing to go to a Church Training School—but I was to see Lillian. I had lowered myself in my own eyes—but I had seen Lillian. Perhaps I exaggerated my own offences: however that may be, love soon silenced conscience, and I almost danced into my cousin's rooms on my return.

* * * * *

That week passed rapidly and happily. I was half amused with the change in my cousin's demeanour. I had evidently risen immensely in his eyes; and I could not help applying, in my heart, to him, Mr. Carlyle's dictum about the valet species—how they never honour the unaccredited hero, having no eye to find him out till properly accredited, and countersigned, and accoutred with full uniform and diploma by that great god, Public Opinion. I saw through the motive of his new-fledged respect for me—and yet encouraged it; for it flattered my vanity. The world must forgive me. It was something for the poor tailor to find himself somewhat appreciated at last, even outwardly. And besides, this sad respect took a form which was very tempting to me now—though the week before it was just the one which I should have repelled with scorn. George became very anxious to lend me money, to order me clothes at his own tailor's, and set me up in various little toilette refinements, that I might make a respectable appearance at the dean's. I knew that he consulted rather the honour of the family, than my good; but I did not know that his aim was also to get me into his power; and I refused more and more weakly at each fresh offer, and at last consented, in an evil hour, to sell my own independence,

for the sake of indulging my love-dream, and appearing to be what I was not.

I saw little of the University men; less than I might have done; less, perhaps, than I ought to have done. My cousin did not try to keep me from them; they, whenever I met them, did not shrink from me, and were civil enough: but I shrank from them. My cousin attributed my reserve to modesty, and praised me for it in his coarse fashion: but he was mistaken. Pride, rather, and something very like envy, kept me silent. Always afraid (at that period of my career) of young men of my own age, I was doubly afraid of these men; not because they were cleverer than I, for they were not, but because I fancied I had no fair chance with them; they had opportunities which I had not, read and talked of books of which I knew nothing; and when they did touch on matters which I fancied I understood, it was from a point of view so different from mine, that I had to choose, as I thought, between standing up alone to be baited by the whole party, or shielding myself behind a proud and somewhat contemptuous silence. I looked on them as ignorant aristocrats; while they looked on me, I verily believe now, as a very good sort of fellow, who ought to talk well, but would not; and went their way carelessly. The truth is, I did envy those men. I did not envy them their learning; for the majority of men who came into my cousin's room had no learning to envy, being rather brilliant and agreeable men than severe students; but I envied them their opportunities of learning; and envied them just as much their opportunities of play—their boating, their cricket, their foot-ball, their riding, and their gay confident carriage, which proceeds from physical health and strength, and which I mistook for the swagger of insolence; while Parker's Piece, with its games, was a sight which made me grind my teeth, when I thought of the very different chance of physical exercise which falls to the lot of a London artisan.

And still more did I envy them when I found that many of them combined, as my cousin did, this physical exercise with really hard mental work, and found the one

help the other. It was bitter to me—whether it ought to have been so or not—to hear of prizemen, wranglers, fellows of colleges, as first rate oars, boxers, foot-ball players; and my eyes once fairly filled with tears, when, after the departure of a little fellow no bigger or heavier than myself, but with the eye and the gait of a game-cock, I was informed that he was "bow-oar in the University eight, and as sure to be senior classic next year as he has a head on his shoulders." And I thought of my nights of study in the lean-to garret, and of the tailor's workshop, and of Sandy's den, and said to myself bitter words, which I shall not set down. Let gentlemen readers imagine them for themselves; and judge rationally and charitably of an unhealthy working-man like me, if his tongue be betrayed, at moments, to envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness.

However, one happiness I had—books. I read in my cousin's room from morning till night. He gave me my meals hospitably enough: but disappeared every day about four to "hall"; after which he did not reappear till eight, the interval being taken up, he said, in "wines" and an hour of billiards. Then he sat down to work, and read steadily and well till twelve, while I, nothing loth, did the same; and so passed, rapidly enough, my week at Cambridge.

CHAPTER XIV.

A CATHEDRAL TOWN.

At length, the wished-for day had arrived; and, with my cousin, I was whirling along, full of hope and desire, towards the cathedral town of D * * * *—through a flat fen country, which though I had often heard it described as ugly, struck my imagination much. The vast height and width of the sky-arch, as seen from those flats as from an ocean—the grey haze shrouding the horizon of our narrow land-view, and closing us in, till we seemed to be floating through infinite space, on a little platform of earth; the rich poplar-fringed farms, with their herds of dappled oxen—the luxuriant crops of oats and beans—the tender green of the tall-rape, a plant till then unknown to me—the long, straight, silver dykes, with their gaudy carpets of strange floating water-plants, and their black banks, studded with the remains of buried forests—the innumerable draining-mills, with their creaking sails and groaning wheels—the endless rows of pollard willows, through which the breeze moaned and rung, as through the strings of some vast Æolian harp; the little island knolls in that vast sea of fen, each with its long village street, and delicately taper spire; all this seemed to me to contain an element of new and peculiar beauty.

"Why!" exclaims the reading public, if perchance it ever sees this tale of mine, in its usual prurient longing after anything like personal gossip, or scandalous anecdote —"why, there is no cathedral town which begins with a D! Through the fen, too! He must mean either Ely;

Lincoln, or Peterborough; that's certain." Then, at one of those places, they find there is dean—not of the name of Winnstay, true—"but his name begins with a W; and he has a pretty daughter—no, a niece; well, that's very near it;—it must be him. No; at another place—there is not a dean, true—but a canon, or an archdeacon—something of that kind; and he has a pretty daughter, really; and his name begins—not with W, but with Y; well, that's the last letter of Winnstay, if it is not the first: that must be the poor man! What a shame to have exposed his family secrets in that way!" And then a whole circle of myths grow up round the man's story. It is credibly ascertained that I am the man who broke into his house last year, after having made love to his housemaid, and stole his writing-desk and plate—else, why should a burglar steal family-letters, if he had not some interest in them? ..... And before the matter dies away, some worthy old gentleman, who has not spoken to a working man since he left his living, thirty years ago, and hates a radical as he does the Pope, receives two or three anonymous letters, condoling with him on the cruel betrayal of his confidence—base ingratitude for undeserved condescension, &c., &c.; and, perhaps, with an enclosure of good advice for his lovely daughter.

But wherever D * * * * is, we arrived there; and with a beating heart, I—and I now suspect my cousin also—walked up the sunny slopes, where the old convent had stood, now covered with walled gardens and noble timber-trees, and crowned by the richly fretted towers of the cathedral, which we had seen, for the last twenty miles, growing gradually larger and more distinct across the level flat. "Ely?" "No; Lincoln!" "Oh! but really, it's just as much like Peterborough!" Never mind, my dear reader; the essence of the fact, as I think, lies not quite so much in the name of the place, as in what was done there—to which I, with all the little respect which I can muster, entreat your attention.

It is not from false shame at my necessary ignorance, but from a fear lest I should bore my readers with what

seems to them trivial, that I refrain from dilating on many a thing which struck me as curious in this my first visit to the house of an English gentleman. I must say, however, though I suppose that it will be numbered, at least, among trite remarks, if not among trivial ones, that the wealth around me certainly struck me, as it has others, as not very much in keeping with the office of one who professed to be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth. But I salved over that feeling, being desirous to see everything in the brightest light, with the recollection that the dean had a private fortune of his own; though it did seem at moments, that if a man has solemnly sworn to devote himself, body and soul, to the cause of the spiritual welfare of the nation, that vow might be not unfairly construed to include his money as well as his talents, time, and health: unless, perhaps, money is considered by spiritual persons as so worthless a thing, that it is not fit to be given to God—a notion which might seem to explain how a really pious and universally respected archbishop, living within a quarter of a mile of one of the worst *infernos* of destitution, disease, filth, and profligacy—can yet find it in his heart to save £120,000 out of church revenues, and leave it to his family; though it will not explain how Irish bishops can reconcile it to their consciences to leave behind them, one and all, large fortunes—for I suppose from fifty to a hundred thousand pounds is something—saved from fees and tithes, taken from the pockets of a Roman Catholic population, whom they have been put there to convert to Protestantism for the last three hundred years—with what success, all the world knows. Of course, it is a most impertinent, and almost a blasphemous thing, for a working man to dare to mention such subjects. Is it not "speaking evil of dignities"? Strange, by-the-by, that merely to mention facts, without note or comment, should be always called "speaking evil"! Does not that argue ill for the facts themselves? Working men think so; but what matter what "the swinish multitude" think?

When I speak of wealth, I do not mean that the dean's household would have been considered by his own class

at all too luxurious. He would have been said, I suppose, to live in a "quiet, comfortable, gentlemanlike way"—"everything very plain and very good." It included a butler—a quiet, good-natured old man—who ushered us into our bedrooms; a footman, who opened the door—a sort of animal for which I have an extreme aversion—young, silly, conceited, over-fed, florid—who looked just the man to sell his soul for a livery, twice as much food as he needed, and the opportunity of unlimited flirtations with the maids; and a coachman, very like other coachmen, whom I saw taking a pair of handsome carriage-horses out to exercise, as we opened the gate.

The old man, silently and as a matter of course, unpacked for me my little portmanteau (lent me by my cousin), and placed my things neatly in various drawers—went down, brought up a jug of hot water, put it on the washing-table—told me that dinner was at six—that the half-hour bell rang at half-past five—and that, if I wanted anything, the footman would answer the bell (bells seeming a prominent idea in his theory of the universe)—and so left me, wondering at the strange fact that free men, with free wills, do sell themselves, by the hundred thousand, to perform menial offices for other men, not for love, but for money; becoming, to define them strictly, bell-answering animals; and are honest, happy, contented, in such a life. A man-servant, a soldier, and a Jesuit, are to me the three great wonders of humanity—three forms of moral suicide, for which I never had the slightest gleam of sympathy, or even comprehension.

* * * * *

At last we went down to dinner, after my personal adornments had been carefully superintended by my cousin, who gave me, over and above, various warnings and exhortations as to my behaviour; which, of course, took due effect, in making me as nervous, constrained, and affected, as possible. When I appeared in the drawing-room, I was kindly welcomed by the dean, the two ladies, and Lord Lynedale.

But, as I stood fidgeting and blushing, sticking my

arms and legs, and head into all sorts of quaint positions —trying one attitude, and thinking it looked awkward, and so exchanged it for another, more awkward still —my eye fell suddenly on a slip of paper, which had conveyed itself, I never knew how, upon the pages of the Illustrated Book of Ballads, which I was turning over:—

"Be natural, and you will be gentlemanlike. If you wish others to forget your rank, do not forget it yourself. If you wish others to remember you with pleasure, forget yourself; and be just what God has made you."

I could not help fancying that the lesson, whether intentionally or not, was meant for me; and a passing impulse made me take up the slip, fold it together, and put it into my bosom. Perhaps it was Lillian's hand-writing! I looked round at the ladies; but their faces were each buried behind a book.

We went in to dinner; and, to my delight, I sat next to my goddess, while opposite me was my cousin. Luckily, I had got some directions from him as to what to say and do, when my wonders, the servants, thrust eatables and drinkables over my shoulders.

Lillian and my cousin chatted away about church-architecture, and the restorations which were going on at the cathedral; while I, for the first half of dinner, feasted my eyes with the sight of a beauty, in which I seemed to discover every moment some new excellence. Every time I looked up at her, my eyes dazzled, my face burnt, my heart sank, and soft thrills ran through every nerve. And yet, Heaven knows, my emotions were as pure as those of an infant. It was beauty, longed for, and found at last, which I adored as a thing not to be possessed, but worshipped. The desire, even the thought, of calling her my own, never crossed my mind. I felt that I could gladly die, if by death I could purchase the permission to watch her. I understood, then, and for ever after, the pure devotion of the old knights and troubadours of chivalry. I seemed to myself to be their brother—one of the holy guild of poet-lovers. I was a new Petrarch, basking in the light-rays of a new Laura. I gazed, and gazed, and found new life in gazing, and was content.

But my simple bliss was perfected, when she suddenly turned to me, and began asking me questions on the very points on which I was best able to answer. She talked about poetry, Tennyson and Wordsworth; asked me if I understood Browning's Sordello; and then comforted me, after my stammering confession that I did not, by telling me she was delighted to hear that; for she did not understand it either, and it was so pleasant to have a companion in ignorance. Then she asked me, if I was much struck with the buildings in Cambridge?—had they inspired me with any verses yet?—I was bound to write something about them—and so on; making the most commonplace remarks look brilliant, from the ease and liveliness with which they were spoken, and the tact with which they were made pleasant to the listener: while I wondered at myself, for enjoying from her lips the flippant, sparkling tattle, which had hitherto made young women to me objects of unspeakable dread, to be escaped by crossing the street, hiding behind doors, and rushing blindly into back-yards and coal-holes.

The ladies left the room; and I, with Lillian's face glowing bright in my imagination, as the crimson orb remains on the retina of the closed eye, after looking intently at the sun, sat listening to a pleasant discussion between the dean and the nobleman, about some country in the East, which they had both visited, and greedily devouring all the new facts which they incidentally brought forth out of the treasures of their highly cultivated minds.

I was agreeably surprised (don't laugh, reader) to find that I was allowed to drink water; and that the other men drank not more than a glass or two of wine, after the ladies had retired. I had, somehow, got both lords and deans associated in my mind with infinite swillings of port wine, and bacchanalian orgies; and sat down at first, in much fear and trembling, lest I should be compelled to join, under penalties of salt-and-water; but I had made up my mind, stoutly, to bear anything rather than get drunk; and so I had all the merit of a temperance-martyr, without any of its disagreeables.

"Well" said I to myself, smiling in spirit, "what would my Chartist friends say if they saw me here? Not even Crossthwaite himself could find a flaw in the appreciation of merit for its own sake, the courtesy and condescension—ah! but he would complain of it, simply for being condescension." But, after all, what else could it be? Were not these men more experienced, more learned, older than myself? They were my superiors; it was in vain for me to attempt to hide it from myself. But the wonder was, that they themselves were the ones to appear utterly unconscious of it. They treated me as an equal; they welcomed me—the young viscount and the learned dean—on the broad ground of a common humanity; as I believe hundreds more of their class would do, if we did not ourselves take a pride in estranging them from us—telling them that fraternization between our classes is impossible, and then cursing them for not fraternizing with us. But of that, more hereafter.

At all events, now my bliss was perfect. No! I was wrong—a higher enjoyment than all awaited me, when, going into the drawing-room, I found Lillian singing at the piano. I had no idea that music was capable of expressing and conveying emotions so intense and ennobling. My experience was confined to street music, and to the bawling at the chapel. And, as yet, Mr. Hullah had not risen into a power more enviable than that of kings, and given to every workman a free entrance into the magic world of harmony and melody, where he may prove his brotherhood with Mozart and Weber, Beethoven and Mendelssohn. Great unconscious demagogue! —leader of the people, and labourer in the cause of divine equality!—thy reward is with the Father of the people!

The luscious softness of the Italian airs overcame me with a delicious enervation. Every note, every interval, each shade of expression spoke to me—I knew not what: and yet they spoke to my heart of hearts. A spirit out of the infinite heaven seemed calling to my spirit, which longed to answer—and was dumb—and could only vent

itself in tears, which welled unconsciously forth, and eased my heart from the painful tension of excitement.

* * * * *

Her voice is hovering o'er my soul—it lingers,
O'ershadowing it with soft and thrilling wings;
The blood and life within those snowy fingers
Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings.
My brain is wild, my breath comes quick,
The blood is listening in my frame;
And thronging shadows, fast and thick,
Fall on my overflowing eyes.
My heart is quivering like a flame;
As morning-dew that in the sunbeam dies,
I am dissolved in these consuming ecstacies.

* * * * *

The dark lady, Miss Staunton, as I ought to call her, saw my emotion, and, as I thought unkindly, checked the cause of it at once.

"Pray do not give us any more of those die-away Italian airs, Lillian. Sing something manful, German or English, or anything you like, except those sentimental wailings."

Lillian stopped, took another book, and commenced, after a short prelude, one of my own songs. Surprise and pleasure overpowered me more utterly than the soft southern melodies had done. I was on the point of springing up and leaving the room, when my raptures were checked by our host, who turned round, and stopped short in an oration on the geology of Upper Egypt.

"What's that about brotherhood and freedom, Lillian? We don't want anything of that kind here."

"It's only a popular London song, papa," answered she, with an arch smile.

"Or likely to become so," added Miss Staunton, in her marked dogmatic tone.

"I am very sorry for London, then." And he returned to the deserts.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MAN OF SCIENCE.

AFTER breakfast the next morning, Lillian retired, saying laughingly, that she must go and see after her clothing club and her dear old women at the almshouse, which, of course, made me look on her as more an angel than ever. And while George was left with Lord Lynedale, I was summoned to a private conference with the dean, in his study.

I found him in a room lined with cabinets of curiosities, and hung all over with strange horns, bones, and slabs of fossils. But I was not allowed much time to look about me; for he commenced at once on the subject of my studies, by asking me whether I was willing to prepare myself for the university, by entering on the study of mathematics?

I felt so intense a repugnance to them, that at the risk of offending him—perhaps, for what I knew, fatally—I dared to demur. He smiled—

"I am convinced, young man, that even if you intended to follow poetry as a profession—and a very poor one you will find it—yet you will never attain to any excellence therein, without far stricter mental discipline than any to which you have been accustomed. That is why I abominate our modern poets. They talk about the glory of the poetic vocation, as if they intended to be kings and world-makers, and all the while they indulge themselves in the most loose and desultory habits of thought. Sir, if they really believed their own grandiloquent assumptions, they would feel that the

responsibility of their mental training was greater, not less, than any one's else. Like the Quakers, they fancy that they honour inspiration by supposing it to be only extraordinary and paroxysmic: the true poet, like the rational Christian, believing that inspiration is continual and orderly, that it reveals harmonious laws, not merely excites sudden emotions. You understand me?"

I did, tolerably; and subsequent conversations with him fixed the thoughts sufficiently in my mind, to make me pretty sure that I am giving a faithful verbal transcript of them.

"You must study some science. Have you read any logic?"

I mentioned Watts' "Logic," and Locke "On the Use of the Understanding"—two books well known to reading artizans.

"Ah," he said, "such books are very well, but they are merely popular. 'Aristotle,' 'Ritter on Induction,' and Kant's 'Prolegomena' and 'Logic'—when you had read them some seven or eight times over, you might consider yourself as knowing somewhat about the matter."

"I have read a little about induction in Whately."

"Ah, very good book, but popular. Did you find that your method of thought received any benefit from it?"

"The truth is—I do not know whether I can quite express myself clearly—but logic, like mathematics, seems to tell me too little about things. It does not enlarge my knowledge of man or nature; and those are what I thirst for. And you must remember—I hope I am not wrong in saying it—that the case of a man of your class, who has the power of travelling, of reading what he will, and seeing what he will, is very different from that of an artisan, whose chances of observation are so sadly limited. You must forgive us, if we are unwilling to spend our time over books which tell us nothing about the great universe outside the shop-windows."

He smiled compassionately. "Very true, my boy, There are two branches of study, then, before you, and by either of them a competent subsistence is possible,

with good interest. Philology is one. But before you could arrive at those depths in it which connect with ethnology, history, and geography, you would require a lifetime of study. There remains yet another. I see you stealing glances at those natural curiosities. In the study of them, you would find, as I believe, more and more daily, a mental discipline superior even to that which language or mathematics give. If I had been blest with a son—but that is neither here nor there—it was my intention to have educated him almost entirely as a naturalist. I think I should like to try the experiment on a young man like yourself."

Sandy Mackaye's definition of legislation for the masses, "Fiat experimentum in corpore vili," rose up in my thoughts, and, half unconsciously, passed my lips. The good old man only smiled.

"That is not my reason, Mr. Locke. I should choose, by preference, a man of your class for experiments, not because the nature is coarser, or less precious in the scale of creation, but because I have a notion, for which, like many others, I have been very much laughed at, that you are less sophisticated, more simple and fresh from nature's laboratory, than the young persons of the upper classes, who begin from the nursery to be more or less trimmed up, and painted over by the artificial state of society—a very excellent state, mind, Mr. Locke. Civilization is, next to Christianity of course, the highest blessing; but not so good a state for trying anthropological experiments on."

I assured him of my great desire to be the subject of such an experiment; and was encouraged by his smile to tell him something about my intense love for natural objects, the mysterious pleasure which I had taken, from my boyhood, in trying to classify them, and my visits to the British Museum, for the purpose of getting at some general knowledge of the natural groups.

"Excellent," he said, "young man; the very best sign I have yet seen in you. And what have you read on these subjects?"

I mentioned several books: Bingley, Bewick, "Hum-

boldt's Travels," "The Voyage of the Beagle," various scattered articles in the Penny and Saturday Magazines, &c., &c.

"Ah!" he said, "popular—you will find; if you will allow me to give you my experience——"

I assured him that I was only too much honoured—and I truly felt so. I knew myself to be in the presence of my rightful superior—my master on that very point of education which I idolized. Every sentence which he spoke gave me fresh light on some matter or other; and I felt a worship for him, totally irrespective of any vulgar and slavish respect for his rank or wealth. The working man has no want for real reverence. Mr. Carlyle's being a "gentlemen" has not injured his influence with the people. On the contrary, it is the artisan's intense longing to find his real *lords* and guides, which makes him despise and execrate his sham ones. Whereof let society take note.

"Then," continued he, "your plan is to take up some one section of the subject, and thoroughly exhaust that. Universal laws manifest themselves only by particular instances. They say, man is the microcosm, Mr. Locke; but the man of science finds every worm and beetle a microcosm in its way. It exemplifies, directly or indirectly, every physical law in the universe, though it may not be two lines long. It is not only a part, but a mirror, of the great whole. It has a definite relation to the whole world, and the whole world has a relation to it. Really, by-the-by, I cannot give you a better instance of what I mean, than in my little diatribe on the Geryon Trifurcifer, a small reptile which I found, some years ago, inhabiting the mud of the salt lakes of Balkhan, which fills up a long-desired link between the Chelonia and the Perenni branchiate Batrachians, and, as I think, though Professor Brown differs from me, connects both with the Herbivorous Cetacea.—Professor Brown is an exceedingly talented man, but a little too cautious in accepting any one's theories but his own. "There it is," he said, as he drew out of a drawer a little pamphlet of some thirty pages—"an old man's darling. I consider that book the outcome of thirteen years' labour."

"It must be very deep," I replied, "to have been worth such long-continued study."

"Oh! science is her own reward. There is hardly a great physical law which I have not brought to bear on the subject of that one small animal; and above all—what is in itself worth a life's labour—I have, I believe, discovered two entirely new laws of my own, though one of them, by-the-by, has been broached by Professor Brown since, in his lectures. He might have mentioned my name in connection with the subject, for I certainly imparted my ideas to him, two years at least before the delivery of those lectures of his. Professor Brown is a very great man, certainly, and a very good man, but not quite so original as is generally supposed. Still, a scientific man must expect his little disappointments and injustices. If you were behind the scenes in the scientific world, I can assure you, you would find as much party-spirit, and unfairness, and jealousy, and emulation there, as anywhere else. Human nature, human nature, everywhere!"

I said nothing, but thought the more; and took the book, promising to study it carefully.

"There is Cuvier's 'Animal Kingdom,' and a dictionary of scientific terms to help you; and mind, it must be got up thoroughly, for I purpose to set you an examination or two in it, a few days hence. Then I shall find out whether you know what is worth all the information in the world."

"What is that, sir?"

"The art of getting information *artem discendi*, Mr. Locke, wherewith the world is badly provided just now, as it is overstocked with the *artem legendi*—the knack of running the eye over books, and fancying that it understands them, because it can talk about then. You cannot play that trick with my Geryon Trifurcifer, I assure you; he is as dry and tough as his name. But, believe me, he is worth mastering, not because he is mine, but simply because he is tough."

I promised all diligence.

"Very good. And be sure, if you intend to be a poet

for these days (and I really think you have some faculty for it), you must become a scientific man. Science has made vast strides, and introduced entirely new modes of looking at nature, and poets must live up to the age. I never read a word of Goethe's verse, but I am convinced that he must be the great poet of the day, just because he is the only one who has taken the trouble to go into the details of practical science. And, in the mean time, I will give you a lesson myself. I see you are longing to know the contents of these cabinets. You shall assist me by writing out the names of this lot of shells, just come from Australia, which I am now going to arrange."

I set to work at once, under his directions; and passed that morning, and the two or three following, delightfully. But I question whether the good dean would have been well satisfied, had he known how all his scientific teaching confirmed my democratic opinions. The mere fact, that I could understand these things when they were set before me, as well as any one else, was to me a simple demonstration of the equality in worth, and therefore in privilege, of all classes. It may be answered, that I had no right to argue from myself to the mob; and that other working geniuses have no right to demand universal enfranchisement for their whole class, just because they, the exceptions, are fit for it. But surely it is hard to call such an error, if it be one, "the insolent assumption of democratic conceit," &c., &c. Does it not look more like the humility of men who are unwilling to assert for themselves peculiar excellence, peculiar privileges; who, like the apostles of old, want no glory, save that which they can share with the outcast and the slave? Let society, among other matters, take note of that.

CHAPTER XVI.

CULTIVATED WOMEN.

I WAS thus brought in contact, for the first time in my life, with two exquisite specimens of cultivated womanhood; and they naturally, as the reader may well suppose, almost entirely engrossed my thoughts and interest.

Lillian, for so I must call her, became daily more and more agreeable; and tried, as I fancied, to draw me out, and show me off to the best advantage; whether from the desire of pleasing herself, or pleasing me, I know not, and do not wish to know—but the consequences to my boyish vanity were such as are more easy to imagine, than pleasant to describe. Miss Staunton, on the other hand, became, I thought, more and more unpleasant; not that she ever, for a moment, outstepped the bounds of the most perfect courtesy; but her manner, which was soft to no one except to Lord Lyndale, was, when she spoke to me, especially dictatorial and abrupt. She seemed to make a point of carping at chance words of mine, and of setting me, down suddenly, by breaking in with some severe, pithy observation, on conversations to which she had been listening unobserved. She seemed, too, to view with dislike anything like cordiality between me and Lillian —a dislike, which I was actually at moments vain enough (such a creature is man!) to attribute to—jealousy!!! till I began to suspect and hate her, as a proud, harsh, and exclusive aristocrat. And my suspicion and hatred received their confirmation, when, one morning, after an evening even more charming than usual, Lillian came down, reserved, peevish, all but sulky,

and showed that that bright heaven of sunny features had room in it for a cloud, and that an ugly one. But I, poor fool, only pitied her, made up my mind that some one had ill-used her; and looked on her as a martyr—perhaps to that harsh cousin of hers.

That day was taken up with writing out answers to the dean's searching questions on his pamphlet, in which, I believe, I acquitted myself tolerably; and he seemed far more satisfied with my commentary than I was with his text. He seemed to ignore utterly anything like religion, or even the very notion of God, in his chains of argument. Nature was spoken of as the willer and producer of all the marvels which he describes; and every word in the book, to my astonishment, might have been written just as easily by an Atheist as by a dignitary of the Church of England.

I could not help, that evening, hinting this defect, as delicately as I could, to my good host, and was somewhat surprised to find that he did not consider it a defect at all.

"I am in no wise anxious to weaken the antithesis between natural and revealed religion. Science may help the former, but it has absolutely nothing to do with the latter. She stands on her own ground, has her own laws, and is her own reward. Christianity is a matter of faith and of the teaching of the Church. It must not go out of its way for science, and science must not go out of her way for it; and where they seem to differ, it is our duty to believe that they are reconcilable by fuller knowledge, but not to clip truth in order to make it match with doctrine."

"Mr. Carlyle," said Miss Staunton, in her abrupt way, "can see that the God of Nature is the God of man."

"Nobody denies that, my dear."

"Except in every word and action; else why do they not write about Nature as if it was the expression of a living, loving spirit, not merely a dead machine?"

"It may be very easy, my dear, for a Deist like Mr. Carlyle to see *his* God in Nature; but if he would accept the truths of Christianity, he would find that there were

deeper mysteries in them than trees and animals can explain."

"Pardon me, sir," I said, "but I think that a very large portion of thoughtful working men agree with you, though, in their case, that opinion has only increased their difficulties about Christianity. They complain that they cannot identify the God of the Bible with the God of the world around them; and one of their great complaints against Christianity is, that it demands assent to mysteries which are independent of, and even contradictory to, the laws of Nature."

The old man was silent.

"Mr. Carlyle is no Deist," said Miss Staunton; "and I am sure, that unless the truths of Christianity contrive soon to get themselves justified by the laws of science, the higher orders will believe in them as little as Mr. Locke informs us that the working classes do."

"You prophesy confidently, my darling."

"Oh, Eleanor is in one of her prophetic moods to-night," said Lillian, slyly. "She has been foretelling me I know not what misery and misfortune, just because I choose to amuse myself in my own way."

And she gave another sly pouting look at Eleanor, and then called me to look over some engravings, chatting over them so charmingly!—and stealing, every now and then, a pretty, saucy look at her cousin, which seemed to say, "I shall do what I like, in spite of your predictions."

This confirmed my suspicions that Eleanor had been trying to separate us; and the suspicion received a further corroboration, indirect, and perhaps very unfair, from the lecture which I got from my cousin after I went up-stairs.

He had been flattering me very much lately about "the impression" I was making on the family, and tormenting me by compliments on the clever way in which I "played my cards"; and when I denied indignantly any such intention, patting me on the back, and laughing me down in a knowing way, as much as to say that he was not to be taken in by my professions of simplicity. He seemed to judge every one by himself, and to have no notion of any middle characters between the mere green-horn and

the deliberate schemer. But to-night, after commencing with the usual compliments, he went on:

"Now, first let me give you one hint, and be thankful for it. Mind your game with that Eleanor—Miss Staunton. She is a regular tyrant, I happen to know: a strong-minded woman, with a vengeance. She manages every one here; and unless you are in her good books, don't expect to keep your footing in this house, my boy. So just mind and pay her a little more attention and Miss Lillian a little less. After all, it is worth the trouble. She is uncommonly well read; and says confounded clever things, too, when she wakes up out of the sulks; and you may pick up a wrinkle or two from her, worth pocketing. You mind what she says to you. You know she is going to be married to Lord Lyndale."

I nodded assent.

"Well, then, if you want to hook him, you must secure her first."

"I want to hook no one, George; I have told you that a thousand times."

"Oh, no! certainly not—by no means! Why should you?" said the artful dodger. And he swung, laughing, out of the room, leaving in my mind a strange suspicion, of which I was ashamed, though I could not shake it off, that he had remarked Eleanor's wish to cool my admiration for Lillian, and was willing, for some purpose of his own, to further that wish. The truth is, I had very little respect for him, or trust in him: and I was learning to look, habitually, for some selfish motive in all he said or did. Perhaps, if I had acted more boldly upon what I did see, I should not have been here now.

CHAPTER XVII.

SERMONS IN STONES.

THE next afternoon was the last but one of my stay at D * * *. We were to dine late, after sunset, and, before dinner, we went into the cathedral. The choir had just finished practising. Certain exceedingly ill-looking men, whose faces bespoke principally sensuality and self-conceit, and whose function was that of praising God, on the sole qualification of good bass and tenor voices, were coming chattering through the choir gates; and behind them a group of small boys were suddenly transforming themselves from angels into sinners, by tearing off their white surplices, and pinching and poking each other noisily as they passed us, with as little reverence as Voltaire himself could have desired.

I had often been in the cathedral before—indeed, we attended the service daily, and I had been appalled, rather than astonished, by what I saw and heard: the unintelligible service—the irreverent gabble of the choristers and readers—the scanty congregation—the meagre portion of the vast building which seemed to be turned to any use: but never more than that evening, did I feel the desolateness, the doleful inutility, of that vast desert nave, with its aisles and transepts—built for some purpose or other now extinct. The whole place seemed to crush and sadden me; and I could not re-echo Lillian's remark:

"How those pillars, rising story above story, and those lines of pointed arches, all lead the eye heavenward! It is a beautiful notion, that about pointed architecture being symbolic of Christianity."

"I ought to be very much ashamed of my stupidity," I answered; "but I cannot feel that, though I believe I ought to do so. That vast groined roof, with its enormous weight of hanging stone, seems to crush one—to bar out the free sky above. Those pointed windows, too—how gloriously the western sun is streaming through them! but their rich hues only dim and deface his light. I can feel what you say, when I look at the cathedral on the outside; there, indeed, every line sweeps the eye upward—carries it from one pinnacle to another, each with less and less standing-ground, till at the summit the building gradually vanishes in a point, and leaves the spirit to wing its way, unsupported and alone, into the ether. "Perhaps," I added, half bitterly, "these cathedrals may be true symbols of the superstition which created them—on the outside, offering to enfranchise the soul and raise it up to heaven; but when the dupes had entered, giving them only a dark prison, and a crushing bondage, which neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear."

"You may sneer at them, if you will, Mr. Locke," said Eleanor, in her severe, abrupt way. "The working classes would have been badly off without them. They were, in their day, the only democratic institution in the world; and the only socialist one too. The only chance a poor man had of rising by his worth, was by coming to the monastery. And bitterly the working classes felt the want of them, when they fell. Your own Cobbett can tell you that."

"Ah," said Lillian, "how different it must have been four hundred years ago!—how solemn and picturesque those old monks must have looked, gliding about the aisles!—and how magnificent the choir must have been, before all the glass and carving, and that beautiful shrine of St. * * * *, blazing with gold and jewels, were all plundered and defaced by those horrid Puritans!"

"Say, reformer-squires," answered Eleanor; "for it was they who did the thing; only it was found convenient, at the Restoration, to lay on the people of the seventeenth century the iniquities which the country-gentlemen committed in the sixteenth."

"Surely," I added, emboldened by her words, "if the monasteries were what their admirers say, some method of restoring the good of the old system, without its evil, ought to be found; and would be found, if it were not—" I paused, recollecting whose guest I was.

"If it were not, I suppose," said Eleanor, "for those lazy, overfed, bigoted hypocrites, the clergy. That, I presume, is the description of them to which you have been most accustomed. Now, let me ask you one question. Do you mean to condemn, just now, the Church as it was, or the Church as it is, or the Church as it ought to be? Radicals have a habit of confusing those three questions, as they have of confusing other things when it suits them."

"Really," I said—for my blood was rising—"I do think that, with the confessed enormous wealth of the clergy, the cathedral establishments especially, they might do more for the people."

"Listen to me a little, Mr. Locke. The laity now-a-days take a pride in speaking evil of the clergy, never seeing that if they are bad, the laity have made them so. Why, what do you impute to them? Their worldliness, their being like the world, like the laity round them—like you, in short? Improve yourselves, and by so doing, if there is this sad tendency in the clergy to imitate you, you will mend them; if you do not find that after all, it is they who will have to mend you. 'As with the people, so with the priest,' is the everlasting law. When, fifty years ago, all classes were drunkards, from the statesman to the peasant, the clergy were drunken also, but not half so bad as the laity. Now the laity are eaten up with covetousness and ambition; and the clergy are covetous and ambitious, but not half so bad as the laity. The laity, and you working men especially, are the dupes of frothy, insincere, official rant, as Mr. Carlyle would call it, in Parliament, on the hustings, at every debating society and Chartist meeting; and, therefore, the clergyman's sermons are apt to be just what people like elsewhere, and what, therefore, they suppose people will like there."

"If, then," I answered, "in spite of your opinions, you

confess the clergy to be so bad, why are you so angry with men of our opinions, if we do plot sometimes a little against the Church?"

"I do not think you know what my opinions are, Mr. Locke. Did you not hear me just now praising the monasteries, because they were socialist and democratic? But why is the badness of the clergy any reason for pulling down the Church? That is another of the confused irrationalities into which you all allow yourselves to fall. What do you mean by crying shame on a man for being a bad clergyman, if a good clergyman is not a good thing? If the very idea of a clergyman was abominable, as your Church-destroyers ought to say, you ought to praise a man for being a bad one, and not acting out this same abominable idea of priesthood. Your very outcry against the sins of the clergy, shows that, even in your minds, a dim notion lies somewhere that a clergyman's vocation is, in itself, a divine, a holy, a beneficent one."

"I never looked at it in that light, certainly," said I, somewhat staggered.

"Very likely not. One word more, for I may not have another opportunity of speaking to you as I would on these matters. You working men complain of the clergy for being bigoted and obscurantist, and hating the cause of the people. Does not nine-tenths of the blame of that lie at your door? I took up, the other day, at hazard, one of your favourite liberty-preaching newspapers; and I saw books advertised in it, whose names no modest woman should ever behold; doctrines and practices advocated in it from which all the honesty, the decency, the common human feeling which is left in the English mind, ought to revolt, and does revolt. You cannot deny it. Your class has told the world that the cause of liberty, equality, and fraternity, the cause which the working masses claim as theirs, identifies itself with blasphemy and indecency, with the tyrannous persecutions of trades-unions, with robbery, assassinations, vitriol-bottles, and midnight incendiarism. And then you curse the clergy for taking you at your word! Whatsoever they do, you attack

them. If they believe you, and stand up for common morality, and for the truths which they know are all-important to poor as well as rich, you call them bigots and persecutors; while if they neglect, in any way, the very Christianity for believing which you insult them, you turn round and call them hypocrites. Mark my words, Mr. Locke, till you gain the respect and confidence of the clergy, you will never rise. The day will come when you will find that the clergy are the only class who can help you. Ah, you may shake your head. I warn you of it. They were the only bulwark of the poor against the mediæval tyranny of Rank; you will find them the only bulwark against the modern tyranny of Mammon."

I was on the point of entreating her to explain herself further, but at that critical moment Lillian interposed.

"Now, stay your prophetic glances into the future; here come Lynedale and papa." And in a moment, Eleanor's whole manner and countenance altered—the petulant, wild unrest, the harsh, dictatorial tone vanished; and she turned to meet her lover, with a look of tender, satisfied devotion, which transfigured her whole face. It was most strange, the power he had over her. His presence, even at a distance, seemed to fill her whole being with rich quiet life. She watched him with folded hands, like a mystic worshipper, waiting for the afflatus of the spirit; and, suspicious and angry as I felt towards her, I could not help being drawn to her by this revelation of depths of strong healthy feeling, of which her usual manner gave so little sign.

This conversation thoroughly puzzled me; it showed me that there might be two sides to the question of the people's cause, as well as to that of others. It shook a little my faith in the infallibility of my own class, to hear such severe animadversions on them, from a person who professed herself as much a disciple of Carlyle as any working man; and who evidently had no lack either of intellect to comprehend or boldness to speak out his doctrines; who could praise the old monasteries for being democratic and socialist, and spoke far more severely of

the clergy than I could have done—because she did not deal merely in trite words of abuse, but showed a real analytic insight into the causes of their short-coming.

* * * * *

That same evening the conversation happened to turn on dress, of which Miss Staunton spoke scornfully and disparagingly, as mere useless vanity and frippery—an empty substitute for real beauty of person as well as the higher beauty of mind. And I, emboldened by the courtesy with which I was always called on to take my share in everything that was said or done, ventured to object, humbly enough, to her notions.

"But is not beauty," I said, "in itself a good and blessed thing, softening, refining, rejoicing the eyes of all who behold?" (And my eyes, as I spoke, involuntary rested on Lillian's face—who saw it, and blushed.) "Surely nothing which helps beauty is to be despised. And, without the charm of dress, beauty, even that of expression, does not really do itself justice. How many lovely and lovable faces there are, for instance, among the working classes, which, if they had but the advantages which ladies possess, might create delight, respect, chivalrous worship in the beholder—but are now never appreciated, because they have not the same fair means of displaying themselves which even the savage girl of the South Sea Islands possesses!"

Lillian said it was so very true—she had really never thought of it before—and somehow I gained courage to go on.

"Besides, dress is a sort of sacrament, if I may use the word—a sure sign of the wearer's character; according as any one is orderly, or modest, or tasteful, or joyous, or brilliant"—and I glanced again at Lillian—"those excellences, or the want of them, are sure to show themselves, in the colours they choose, and the cut of their garments. In the workroom, I and a friend of mine used often to amuse ourselves over the clothes we were making, by speculating from them on the sort of people the wearers were to be; and I fancy we were not often wrong."

My cousin looked daggers at me, and for a moment I

fancied I had committed a dreadful mistake in mentioning my tailor-life. So I had in his eyes, but not in those of the really well-bred persons round me.

"Oh, how very amusing it must have been! I think I shall turn milliner, Eleanor, for the fun of divining every one's little failings from their caps and gowns!"

"Go on, Mr. Locke," said the dean, who had seemed buried in the "Transactions of the Royal Society." "The fact is novel, and I am more obliged to any one who gives me that, than if he gave me a bank-note. The money gets spent and done with; but I cannot spend the fact: it remains for life as permanent capital, returning interest and compound interest *ad infinitum*. By-the-by, tell me about those same workshops. I have heard more about them than I like to believe true."

And I did tell him all about them; and spoke, my blood rising as I went on, long and earnestly, perhaps eloquently. Now and then I got abashed, and tried to stop; and then the dean informed me that I was speaking well and sensibly, while Lillian entreated me to go on. She had never conceived such things possible—it was as interesting as a novel, &c., &c.; and Miss Staunton sat with compressed lips and frowning brow, apparently thinking of nothing but her book, till I felt quite angry at her apathy—for such it seemed to me to be.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MY FALL.

AND now the last day of our stay at D * * * had arrived, and I had as yet heard nothing of the prospects of my book; though, indeed, the company in which I had found myself had driven literary ambition, for the time being, out of my head, and bewitched me to float down the stream of daily circumstance, satisfied to snatch the enjoyment of each present moment. That morning, however, after I had fulfilled my daily task of arranging and naming objects of natural history, the dean settled himself back in his arm-chair, and bidding me sit down, evidently meditated a business conversation.

He had heard from his publisher, and read his letter to me. "The poems were on the whole much liked. The most satisfactory method of publishing for all parties, would be by procuring so many subscribers, each agreeing to take so many copies. In consideration of the dean's known literary judgment and great influence, the publisher would, as a private favour, not object to take the risk of any further expenses."

So far everything sounded charming. The method was not a very independent one, but it was the only one; and I should actually have the delight of having published a volume. But, alas! "he thought that the sale of the book might be greatly facilitated, if certain passages of a strong political tendency were omitted. He did not wish personally to object to them as statements of facts, or to the pictorial vigour with which they were expressed; but he thought that they were somewhat too strong for the

present state of the public taste; and though he should be the last to allow any private considerations to influence his weak patronage of rising talent, yet, considering his present connexion, he should hardly wish to take on himself the responsibility of publishing such passages, unless with great modifications."

"You see," said the good old man, "the opinion of respectable practical men, who know the world, exactly coincides with mine. I did not like to tell you that I could not help in the publication of your MSS. in their present state; but I am sure, from the modesty and gentleness which I have remarked in you, your readiness to listen to reason, and your pleasing freedom from all violence or coarseness in expressing your opinions, that you will not object to so exceedingly reasonable a request, which, after all, is only for your good. Ah! young man," he went on, in a more feeling tone than I had yet heard from him, "if you were once embroiled in that political world, of which you know so little, you would soon be crying like David, 'Oh that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest!' Do you fancy that you can alter a fallen world? What it is, it always has been, and will be to the end. Every age has its political and social nostrums, my dear young man, and fancies them infallible; and the next generation arises to curse them as failures in practice, and superstitious in theory, and try some new nostrum of its own."

I sighed.

"Ah! you may sigh. But we have each of us to be disenchanted of our dream. There was a time once when I talked republicanism as loudly as raw youth ever did—when I had an excuse for it, too; for when I was a boy, I saw the French Revolution; and it was no wonder if young, enthusiastic brains were excited by all sorts of wild hopes—'perfectibility of the species,' 'rights of man,' 'universal liberty, equality, and brotherhood.'—My dear sir, there is nothing new under the sun; all that is stale and trite to a septuagenarian, who has seen where it all ends. I speak to you freely, because I am deeply interested in you. I feel that this is the important ques-

tion of your life, and that you have talents, the possession of which is a heavy responsibility. Eschew politics, once and for all, as I have done. I might have been, I may tell you, a bishop at this moment, if I had condescended to meddle again in those party questions of which my youthful experience sickened me. But I knew that I should only weaken my own influence, as that most noble and excellent man, Dr. Arnold, did, by interfering in politics. The poet, like the clergyman and the philosopher, has nothing to do with politics. Let them choose the better part, and it shall not be taken from them. The world may rave," he continued, waxing eloquent as he approached his favourite subject—"the world may rave, but in the study there is quiet. The world may change, Mr. Locke, and will; but 'the earth abideth for ever.' Solomon had seen somewhat of politics, and social improvement, and so on; and behold, then, as now, 'all was vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? The thing which hath been, it is that which shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun. One generation passeth away, and another cometh; but the earth abideth for ever.' No wonder that the wisest of men took refuge from such experience, as I have tried to do, in talking of all herbs, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that groweth on the wall!

"Ah! Mr. Locke," he went on, in a soft melancholy, half-abstracted tone—"ah! Mr. Locke, I have felt deeply, and you will feel some day, the truth of Jarno's saying in 'Wilhelm Meister,' when he was wandering alone in the Alps, with his geological hammer, 'These rocks, at least, tell me no lies, as men do.' Ay, there is no lie in Nature, no discord in the revelations of science, in the laws of the universe. Infinite, pure, unfallen, earth-supporting Titans, fresh as on the morning of creation, those great laws endure; your only true democrats, too—for nothing is too great or too small for them to take note of. No tiniest gnat, or speck of dust, but they feed it, guide it,

and preserve it.—Hail and snow, wind and vapour, fulfilling their Maker's word; and like him, too, hiding themselves from the wise and prudent, and revealing themselves unto babes. Yes, Mr. Locke; it is the childlike, simple, patient, reverent heart, which science at once demands and cultivates. To prejudice or haste, to self-conceit or ambition, she proudly shuts her treasuries—to open them to men of humble heart, whom this world thinks simple dreamers—her Newtons, and Owens, and Faradays. Why should you not become such a man as they? You have the talents—you have the love for nature, you seem to have the gentle and patient spirit, which, indeed, will grow up more and more in you, if you become a real student of science. Or, if you must be a poet, why not sing of nature, and leave those to sing political squabbles, who have no eye for the beauty of her repose? How few great poets have been politicians!"

I gently suggested Milton.

"Ay! he became a great poet only when he had deserted politics, because they had deserted him. In blindness and poverty, in the utter failure of all his national theories, he wrote the works which have made him immortal. Was Shakespeare a politician? or any one of the great poets who have arisen during the last thirty years? Have they not all seemed to consider it a sacred duty to keep themselves, as far as they could, out of party strife?"

I quoted Southey, Shelley, and Burns, as instances to the contrary; but his induction was completed already, to his own satisfaction.

"Poor dear Southey was a great verse-maker, rather than a great poet; and I always consider that his party-prejudices and party-writing narrowed and harshened a mind which ought to have been flowing forth freely and lovingly towards all forms of life. And as for Shelley and Burns, their politics dictated to them at once the worst portions of their poetry and of their practice. Shelley, what little I have read of him, only seems himself when he forgets radicalism for nature; and you would not set Burns' life or death, either, as a model for imitation in any

class. Now, do you know, I must ask you to leave us a little. I am somewhat fatigued with this long discussion" (in which, certainly, I had borne no great share); "and I am sure, that after all I have said, you will see the propriety of acceding to the publisher's advice. Go and think over it, and let me have your answer by post time."

I did go and think over it—too long for my good. If I had acted on the first impulse, I should have refused, and been safe. These passages were the very pith and marrow of the poems. They were the very words which I had felt it my duty, my glory, to utter. I, who had been a working man, who had experienced all their sorrows and temptations—I, seemed called by every circumstance of my life to preach their cause, to expose their wrongs—I to squash my convictions, to stultify my book for the sake of popularity, money, patronage! And yet—all that involved seeing more of Lillian. They were only too powerful inducements in themselves, alas! but I believe I could have resisted them tolerably, if they had not been backed by love. And so a struggle arose, which the rich reader may think a very fantastic one, though the poor man will understand it, and surely pardon it also—seeing that he himself is Man. Could I not, just once in a way, serve God and Mammon at once?—or rather, not Mammon, but Venus: a worship which looked to me, and really was in my case, purer than all the Mariolatry in Popedom. After all, the fall might not be so great as it seemed—perhaps I was not infallible on these same points. (It is wonderful how humble and self-denying one becomes when one is afraid of doing one's duty.) Perhaps the dean might be right. He had been a republican himself once, certainly. The facts, indeed, which I had stated, there could be no doubt of; but I might have viewed them through a prejudiced and angry medium—I might have been not quite logical in my deductions from them—I might—— In short, between "perhapses" and "mights" I fell—a very deep, real, damnable fall; and consented to emasculate my poems, and become a flunkey and a dastard.

I mentioned my consent that evening to the party; the dean purred content thereat. Eleanor, to my astonishment, just said, sternly and abruptly,

"Weak!" and then turned away, while Lillian began:

"Oh! what a pity! And really they were some of the prettiest verses of all! But of course my father must know best; you are quite right to be guided by him, and do whatever is proper and prudent. After all, papa, I have got the naughtiest of them all, you know, safe. Eleanor set it to music, and wrote it out in her book, and I thought it was so charming that I copied it."

What Lillian said about herself I drank in as greedily as usual; what she said about Eleanor fell on a heedless ear, and vanished, not to reappear in my recollection till —— But I must not anticipate.

So it was all settled pleasantly; and I sat up that evening writing a bit of verse for Lillian, about the Old Cathedral, and "Heaven-aspiring towers," and "Aisles of cloistered shade," and all that sort of thing; which I did not believe or care for; but I thought it would please her, and so it did; and I got golden smiles and compliments for my first, though not my last, insincere poem. I was going fast down hill, in my hurry to rise. However, as I said, it was all pleasant enough. I was to return to town, and there await the dean's orders; and, most luckily, I had received that morning from Sandy Mackaye a characteristic letter:

"Gowk, Telemachus, hearken! Item 1. Ye're fou wi' the Circean cup, aneath the shade o' shovel hats and steeple houses.

"Item 2. I, cuif-Mentor that I am, wearing out a gude pair o' gude Scots brogues that my sister's husband's third cousin sent me a towmond gane fra Aberdeen, rinning ower the town to a' journals, respectable and ither, anent the sellin o' your 'Autobiography of an Engine-Boiler in the Vauxhall Road,' the whilk I ha' disposit o' at the last, to O'Flynn's *Weekly Warwhoop;* and gin ye ha' ony mair sic trash in your head, you may get your meal whiles out o' the same kist; unless, as I sair misdoubt, ye're praying already, like Eli's bairns, 'to be put into

ane o' the priest's offices, that ye may eat a piece o' bread.'

"Ye'll be coming the-morrow? I'm lane without ye; though I look for ye surely to come ben wi' a gowd shoulder-note, and a red nose."

This letter, though it hit me hard, and made me, I confess, a little angry at the moment with my truest friend, still offered me a means of subsistence, and enabled me to decline safely the pecuniary aid which I dreaded the dean's offering me. And yet I felt dispirited and ill at ease. My conscience would not let me enjoy the success I felt I had attained. But next morning I saw Lillian; and I forgot books, people's cause, conscience, and everything.

* * * * *

I went home by coach—a luxury on which my cousin insisted—as he did on lending me the fare; so that in all I owed him somewhat more than eleven pounds. But I was too happy to care for a fresh debt, and home I went, considering my fortune made.

My heart fell, as I stepped into the dingy little old shop! Was it the meanness of the place after the comfort and elegance of my late abode? Was it disappointment at not finding Mackaye at home? Or was it that black-edged letter which lay waiting for me on the table? I was afraid to open it; I knew not why. I turned it over and over several times, trying to guess whose the handwriting on the cover might be; the postmark was two days old; and at last I broke the seal.

"Sir,—This is to inform you that your mother, Mrs. Locke, died this morning, a sensible sinner, not without assurance of her election: and that her funeral is fixed for Wednesday, the 29th instant.

"The humble servant of the Lord's people,

"J. WIGGINTON."

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CHAPTER XIX.

SHORT AND SAD.

I SHALL pass over the agonies of the next few days. There is self-exenteration enough and to spare in my story, without dilating on them. They are too sacred to publish, and too painful, alas! even to recall. I write my story, too, as a working man. Of those emotions which are common to humanity, I shall say but little—except when it is necessary to prove that the working man has feelings like the rest of his kind, But those feelings may, in this case, be supplied by the reader's own imagination. Let him represent them to himself as bitter, as remorseful as he will, he will not equal the reality. True, she had cast me off; but had I not rejoiced in that rejection which should have been my shame? True, I had fed on the hope of some day winning reconciliation, by winning fame; but before the fame had arrived, the reconciliation had become impossible. I had shrunk from going back to her, as I ought to have done, in filial humility, and, therefore, I was not allowed to go back to her in the pride of success. Heaven knows, I had not forgotten her. Night and day I had thought of her with prayers and blessings; but I had made a merit of my own love to her—my forgiveness of her, as I dared to call it. I had pampered my conceit with a notion that I was a martyr in the cause of genius and enlightenment. How hollow, windy, heartless, all that looked now. There! I will say no more. Heaven preserve any who read these pages from such days and nights as I dragged on till that funeral, and for weeks after it was over, when I had sat once more in the little

old chapel, with all the memories of my childhood crowding up, and tantilizing me with the vision of their simple peace—never, never, to return! I heard my mother's dying pangs, her prayers, her doubts, her agonies, for my reprobate soul, dissected for the public good by my old enemy, Mr. Wigginton, who dragged in among his fulsome eulogies of my mother's "signs of grace," rejoicings that there were "babes span-long in hell." I saw my sister Susan, now a tall handsome woman, but become all rigid, sour, with coarse grim lips, and that crushed, self-conscious, reserved, almost dishonest look about the eyes, common to fanatics of every creed. I heard her cold farewell, as she put into my hands certain notes and diaries of my mother's, which she had bequeathed to me on her death-bed. I heard myself proclaimed inheritor of some small matters of furniture, which had belonged to her; told Susan carelessly to keep them for herself; and went forth, fancying that the curse of Cain was on my brow.

I took home the diary; but several days elapsed before I had courage to open it. Let the words I read there be as secret as the misery which dictated them. I had broken my mother's heart!—no! I had not!—The infernal superstition which taught her to fancy that Heaven's love was narrower than her own—that God could hate his creature, not for its sins, but for the very nature which he had given it—that, that had killed her.

And I remarked too, with a gleam of hope, that in several places where sunshine seemed ready to break through the black cloud of fanatic gloom—where she seemed inclined not merely to melt towards me (for there was, in every page, an under-current of love deeper than death, and stronger than the grave), but also to dare to trust God on my behalf—whole lines carefully erased page after page torn out, evidently long after the MSS. were written. I believe, to this day, that either my poor sister or her father-confessor was the perpetrator of that act. The *fraus pia* is not yet extinct; and it is as inconvenient now as it was in popish times, to tell the whole truth about saints, when they dare to say or do things which will not quite fit into the formulæ of their sect.

But what was to become of Susan? Though my uncle continued to her the allowance which he had made to my mother, yet I was her natural protector—and she was my only tie upon earth. Was I to lose her, too? Might we not, after all, be happy together, in some little hole in Chelsea, like Elia and his Bridget? That question was solved for me. She declined my offers; saying, that she could not live with any one whose religious opinions differed from her own, and that she had already engaged a room at the house of a Christian friend; and was shortly to be united to that dear man of God, Mr. Wigginton, who was to be removed to the work of the Lord in Manchester.

I knew the scoundrel, but it would have been impossible for me to undeceive her. Perhaps he was only a scoundrel—perhaps he would not ill-treat her. And yet —my own little Susan! my play-fellow! my only tie on earth!—to lose her—and not only her, but her respect, her love!—And my spirit, deep enough already, sank deeper still into sadness; and I felt myself alone on earth, and clung to Mackaye as to a father—and a father indeed that old man was to me.

CHAPTER XX.

PEGASUS IN HARNESS.

BUT, in sorrow or in joy, I had to earn my bread; and so, too, had Crossthwaite, poor fellow! How he contrived to feed himself and his little Katie for the next few years is more than I can tell; at all events he worked hard enough. He scribbled, agitated, ran from London to Manchester, and Manchester to Bradford, spouting, lecturing—sowing the east wind, I am afraid, and little more. Whose fault was it? What could such a man do, with that fervid tongue, and heart, and brain of his, in such a station as his, such a time as this? Society had helped to make him an agitator. Society has had, more or less, to take the consequences of her own handiwork. For Crossthwaite did not speak without hearers. He could make the fierce, shrewd, artisan nature flash out into fire—not always celestial, nor always, either, infernal. So he agitated and lived—how, I know not. That he did do so, is evident from the fact that he and Katie are at this moment playing chess in the cabin, before my eyes, and making love, all the while, as if they had not been married a week. . . . Ah, well!

I, however, had to do more than get my bread; I had to pay off these fearful eleven pounds odd, which, now that all the excitement of my stay at D * * * had been so sadly quenched, lay like lead upon my memory. My list of subscribers filled slowly, and I had no power of increasing it by any canvassings of my own. My uncle, indeed, had promised to take two copies, and my cousin one; not wishing, of course, to be so uncommercial as to run

any risk, before they had seen whether my poems would succeed. But, with those exceptions, the dean had it all his own way; and he could not be expected to forego his own literary labours for my sake; so, through all that glaring summer, and sad foggy autumn, and nipping winter, I had to get my bread as I best could—by my pen. Mackaye grumbled at my writing so much, and so fast, and sneered about the *furor scribendi*. But it was hardly fair upon me. "My mouth craved it of me," as Solomon says. I had really no other means of livelihood. Even if I could have gotten employment as a tailor, in the honourable trade, I loathed the business utterly—perhaps, alas! to confess the truth, I was beginning to despise it. I could bear to think of myself as a poor genius, in connection with my new wealthy and high-bred patrons; for there was precedent for the thing. Penniless bards and squires of low degree, low-born artists, ennobled by their pictures—there was something grand in the notion of mind triumphant over the inequalities of rank, and associating with the great and wealthy as their spiritual equal, on the mere footing of its own innate nobility; no matter to what den it might return, to convert it into a temple of the Muses, by the glorious creations of its fancy, &c., &c. But to go back daily from the drawing-room and the publisher's to the goose and the shopboard, was too much for my weakness, even if it had been physically possible, as, thank Heaven, it was not.

So I became a hack-writer, and sorrowfully, but deliberately, "put my Pegasus into heavy harness," as my betters had done before me. It was miserable work, there is no denying it—only not worse than tailoring. To try and serve God and Mammon too; to make miserable compromises daily between the two great incompatibilities, what was true, and what would pay; to speak my mind, in fear and trembling, by hints, and halves, and quarters; to be daily hauling poor Truth just up to the top of the well, and then, frightened at my own success, let her plump down again to the bottom; to sit there trying to teach others, while my mind was in a whirl of

doubt; to feed others' intellects while my own were hungering; to grind on in the Philistine's mill, or occasionally make sport for them, like some weary-hearted clown grinning in a pantomime in a "light article," as blind as Samson, but not, alas! as strong, for indeed my Delilah of the West-end had clipped my locks, and there seemed little chance of their growing again. That face and that drawing-room flitted before me from morning till eve, and enervated and distracted my already overwearied brain.

I had no time, besides, to concentrate my thoughts sufficiently for poetry; no time to wait for inspiration. From the moment I had swallowed my breakfast, I had to sit scribbling off my thoughts anyhow in prose; and soon my own scanty stock was exhausted, and I was forced to beg, borrow, and steal notions and facts wherever I could get them. Oh! the misery of having to read not what I longed to know, but what I thought would pay! to skip page after page of interesting matter, just to pick out a single thought or sentence which could be stitched into my patchwork! and then the still greater misery of seeing the article which I had sent to press a tolerably healthy and lusty bantling, appear in print next week after suffering the inquisition tortures of the editorial censorship, all maimed, and squinting, and one-sided, with the colour rubbed off its poor cheeks, and generally a villanous hang-dog look of ferocity, so different from its birth-smile that I often did not know my own child again!—and then, when I dared to remonstrate, however feebly, to be told, by way of comfort, that the public taste must be consulted! It gave me a hopeful notion of the said taste, certainly; and often and often I groaned in spirit over the temper of my own class, which not only submitted to, but demanded such one-sided bigotry, prurience, and ferocity, from those who set up as its guides and teachers.

Mr. O'Flynn, editor of the *Weekly Warwhoop*, whose white slave I now found myself, was, I am afraid, a pretty faithful specimen of that class, as it existed before the bitter lesson of the 10th of April brought the Chartist

working men and the Chartist press to their senses. Thereon sprang up a new race of papers, whose moral tone, whatever may be thought of their political or doctrinal opinions, was certainly not inferior to that of the Whig and Tory press. The *Commonwealth*, the *Standard of Freedom*, the *Plain Speaker*, were reprobates, if to be a Chartist is to be a reprobate: but none except the most one-sided bigots could deny them the praise of a stern morality and a lofty earnestness, a hatred of evil and a craving after good, which would often put to shame many a paper among the oracles of Belgravia and Exeter Hall. But those were the days of lubricity and O'Flynn. Not that the man was an unredeemed scoundrel. He was no more profligate, either in his literary or his private morals, than many a man who earns his hundreds, sometimes his thousands, a year, by prophesying smooth things to Mammon, crying in daily leaders "Peace! peace!" when there is no peace, and daubing the rotten walls of careless luxury and self-satisfied covetousness with the untempered mortar of party statistics and garbled foreign news—till "the storm shall fall, and the breaking thereof cometh suddenly in an instant." Let those of the respectable press who are without sin, cast the first stone at the unrespectable. Many of the latter class, who have been branded as traitors and villains, were single-minded, earnest, valiant men; and, as for even O'Flynn, and those worse than him, what was really the matter with them was, that they were too honest—they spoke out too much of their whole minds. Bewildered, like Lear, amid the social storm, they had determined, like him, to become "unsophisticated," "to owe the worm no silk, the cat no perfume"—seeing, indeed, that if they had, they could not have paid for them; so they tore off, of their own will, the peacock's feathers of gentility, the sheep's clothing of moderation, even the fig-leaves of decent reticence, and became just what they really were—just what hundreds more would become, who now sit in the high places of the earth, if it paid them as well to be unrespectable as it does to be respectable; if the selfishness

and covetousness, bigotry and ferocity, which are in them, and more or less in every man, had happened to enlist them against existing evils, instead of for them. O'Flynn would have been gladly as respectable as they; but, in the first place, he must have starved; and in the second place, he must have lied; for he believed in his own radicalism with his whole soul. There was a ribald sincerity, a frantic courage in the man. He always spoke the truth when it suited him, and very often when it did not. He did see, which is more than all do, that oppression is oppression, and humbug, humbug. He had faced the gallows before now without flinching. He had spouted rebellion in the Birmingham Bullring, and elsewhere, and taken the consequences like a man; while his colleagues left their dupes to the tender mercies of broadswords and bayonets, and decamped in the disguise of sailors, old women, and dissenting preachers. He had sat three months in Lancaster Castle, the Bastille of England, one day perhaps to fall like that Parisian one, for a libel which he never wrote, because he would not betray his cowardly contributor. He had twice pleaded his own cause, without help of attorney, and showed himself as practised in every law-quibble and practical cheat as if he had been a regularly ordained priest of the blue-bag; and each time, when hunted at last into a corner, had turned valiantly to bay, with wild witty Irish eloquence, "worthy," as the press say of poor misguided Mitchell, "of a better cause." Altogether, a much-enduring Ulysses, unscrupulous, tough-hided, ready to do and suffer anything fair or foul, for what he honestly believed—if a confused, virulent positiveness be worthy of the name "belief"—to be the true and righteous cause.

Those who class all mankind compendiously and comfortably under the two exhaustive species of saints and villains, may consider such a description garbled and impossible. I have seen few men, but never yet met I among those few either perfect saint or perfect villain. I draw men as I have found them—inconsistent, piecemeal, better than their own actions, worse than their own

opinions, and poor O'Flynn among the rest. Not that there were no questionable spots in the sun of his fair fame. It was whispered that he had in old times done dirty work for Dublin Castle bureaucrats—nay, that he had even, in a very hard season, written court poetry for the *Morning Post;* but all these little peccadilloes he carefully veiled in that kindly mist which hung over his youthful years. He had been a medical student, and got plucked, his foes declared, in his examination. He had set up a savings-bank, which broke. He had come over from Ireland, to agitate for "repale" and "rint," and, like a wise man as he was, had never gone back again. He had set up three or four papers in his time, and entered into partnership with every leading democrat in turn; but his papers failed, and he quarrelled with his partners, being addicted to profane swearing and personalities. And now, at last, after Ulyssean wanderings, he had found rest in the office of the *Weekly Warwhoop,* if rest it could be called, that perennial hurricane of plotting, railing, sneering, and bombast, in which he lived, never writing a line, on principle, till he had worked himself up into a passion.

I will dwell no more on so distasteful a subject. Such leaders, let us hope, belong only to the past—to the youthful self-will and licentiousness of democracy; and as for reviling O'Flynn, or any other of his class, no man has less right than myself, I fear, to cast stones at such as they. I fell as low as almost any, beneath the besetting sins of my class; and shall I take merit to myself, because God has shown me, a little earlier perhaps than to them, somewhat more of the true duties and destinies of The Many? Oh, that they could see the depths of my affection to them! Oh, that they could see the shame and self-abasement with which, in rebuking their sins, I confess my own! If they are apt to be flippant and bitter, so was I. If they lust to destroy, without knowing what to build up instead, so did I. If they make an almighty idol of that Electoral Reform, which ought to be, and can be, only a preliminary means, and expect final deliverance from "their twenty-thousandth part of

'a talker in the national palaver," so did I. Unhealthy and noisome as was the literary atmosphere in which I now found myself, it was one to my taste. The very contrast between the peaceful, intellectual luxury which I had just witnessed, and the misery of my class and myself, quickened my delight in it. In bitterness, in sheer envy, I threw my whole soul into it, and spoke evil, and rejoiced in evil. It was so easy to find fault! It pampered my own self-conceit, my own discontent, while it saved me the trouble of inventing remedies. Yes; it was indeed easy to find fault. "The world was all before me, where to choose." In such a disorganized, anomalous, grumbling, party-embittered element as this English society, and its twin pauperism and luxury, I had but to look straight before me to see my prey.

And thus I became daily more and more cynical, fierce, reckless. My mouth was filled with cursing—and too often justly. And all the while, like tens of thousands of my class, I had no man to teach me. Sheep scattered on the hills, we were, that had no shepherd. What wonder if our bones lay bleaching among rocks and quagmires, and wolves devoured the heritage of God?

Mackaye had nothing positive, after all, to advise or propound. His wisdom was one of apophthegms and maxims, utterly impracticable, too often merely negative, as was his creed, which, though he refused to be classed with any sect, was really a somewhat undefined Unitarianism—or rather Islamism. He could say, with the old Moslem, "God is great—who hath resisted his will?" And he believed what he said, and lived manful and pure, reverent and self-denying, by that belief, as the first Moslem did. But that was not enough.

"Not enough? Merely negative?"

No—*that* was positive enough, and mighty; but I repeat it, it was not enough. He felt it so himself; for he grew daily more and more cynical, more and more hopeless about the prospects of his class and of all humanity. Why not? Poor suffering wretches! what is it to them to know that "God is great," unless you can prove to

them God is also merciful? Did he indeed care for men at all?—was what I longed to know; was all this misery and misrule around us his will—his stern and necessary law—his lazy connivance? And were we to free ourselves from it by any frantic means that came to hand? or had he ever interfered himself? Was there a chance, a hope, of his interfering now, in our own time, to take the matter into his own hand, and come out of his place to judge the earth in righteousness? That was what we wanted to know; and poor Mackaye could give no comfort there. "God was great—the wicked would be turned into hell." Ay—the few wilful, triumphant wicked; but the millions of suffering, starving wicked, the victims of society and circumstance—what hope for them? "God was great." And for the clergy, our professed and salaried teachers, all I can say is—and there are tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of workmen who can re-echo my words—with the exception of the dean and my cousin, and one who shall be mentioned hereafter, a clergyman never spoke to me in my life.

Why should he? Was I not a Chartist and an Infidel? The truth is, the clergy are afraid of us. To read the *Dispatch*, is to be excommunicated. Young men's classes? Honour to them, however few they are—however hampered by the restrictions of religious bigotry and political cowardice. But the working men, whether rightly or wrongly, do not trust them; they do not trust the clergy who set them on foot; they do not expect to be taught at them the things they long to know—to be taught the whole truth in them about history, politics, science, the Bible. They suspect them to be mere tubs to the whale—mere substitutes for education, slowly and late adopted, in order to stop the mouths of the importunate. They may misjudge the clergy; but whose fault is it if they do? Clergymen of England!—look at the history of your Establishment for the last fifty years, and say, what wonder is it if the artisan mistrust you? Every spiritual reform, since the time of John Wesley, has had to establish itself in the teeth of insult, calumny, and persecution. Every ecclesiastical reform comes not

from within, but from without your body. Mr. Horsman, struggling against every kind of temporizing and trickery, has to do the work which bishops, by virtue of their seat in the House of Lords, ought to have been doing years ago. Everywhere we see the clergy, with a few persecuted exceptions (like Dr. Arnold), proclaiming themselves the advocates of Toryism, the dogged opponents of our political liberty, living either by the accursed system of pew-rents, or else by one which depends on the high price of corn; chosen exclusively from the classes who crush us down; prohibiting all free discussion on religious points; commanding us to swallow down, with faith as passive and implicit as that of a Papist, the very creeds from which their own bad example, and their scandalous neglect, have, in the last three generations, alienated us; never mixing with the thoughtful working men, except in the prison, the hospital, or in extreme old age; betraying, in every tract, in every sermon, an ignorance of the doubts, the feelings, the very language of the masses, which would be ludicrous, were it not accursed before God and man. And then will you show us a few tardy improvements here and there, and ask us, indignantly, why we distrust you? Oh! gentlemen, if you cannot see for yourselves the causes of our distrust, it is past our power to show you. We must leave it to God.

* * * * *

But to return to my own story. I had, as I said before, to live by my pen; and in that painful, confused, maimed way, I contrived to scramble on the long winter through, writing regularly for the *Weekly Warwhoop*, and sometimes getting an occasional scrap into some other cheap periodical, often on the very verge of starvation, and glad of a handful of meal from Sandy's widow's barrel. If I had had more than my share of feasting in the summer, I made the balance even, during those frosty months, by many a bitter fast.

And here let me ask you, gentle reader, who are just now considering me ungentle, virulent, and noisy, did you ever, for one day in your whole life, literally, involuntarily, and in spite of all your endeavours, longings, and

hungerings, *not get enough to eat?* If you ever have, it must have taught you several things.

But all this while, it must not be supposed that I had forgotten my promise to good Farmer Porter, to look for his missing son. And, indeed, Crossthwaite and I were already engaged in a similar search for a friend of his—the young tailor, who, as I told Porter, had been lost for several months. He was the brother of Crossthwaite's wife, a passionate, kind-hearted Irishman, Mike Kelly by name, reckless and scatter-brained enough to get himself into every possible scrape, and weak enough of will never to get himself out of one. For these two, Crossthwaite and I had searched from one sweater's den to another, and searched in vain. And though the present interest and exertion kept us both from brooding over our own difficulties, yet in the long run it tended only to embitter and infuriate our minds. The frightful scenes of hopeless misery which we witnessed—the ever widening pit of pauperism and slavery, gaping for fresh victims day by day, as they dropped out of the fast lessening "honourable trade," into the ever-increasing miseries of sweating, piece-work, and starvation prices; the horrible certainty that the same process which was devouring our trade was slowly, but surely, eating up every other also; the knowledge that there was no remedy, no salvation for us in man, that political economists had declared such to be the law and constitution of society, and that our rulers had believed that message, and were determined to act upon it;—if all these things did not go far towards maddening us, we must have been made of sterner stuff than any one who reads this book.

At last, about the middle of January, just as we had given up the search as hopeless, and poor Katie's eyes were getting red and swelled with daily weeping, a fresh spur was given to our exertions, by the sudden appearance of no less a person than the farmer himself. What ensued upon his coming must be kept for another chapter.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SWEATER'S DEN.

I WAS greedily devouring Lane's "Arabian Nights," which had made their first appearance in the shop that day.

Mackaye sat in his usual place, smoking a clean pipe, and assisting his meditations by certain mysterious chironomic signs; while opposite to him was Farmer Porter—a stone or two thinner than when I had seen him last, but one stone is not much missed out of seventeen. His forehead looked smaller, and his jaws larger than ever, and his red face was sad, and furrowed with care.

Evidently, too, he was ill at ease about other matters besides his son. He was looking out of the corners of his eyes, first at the skinless cast on the chimney-piece, then at the crucified books hanging over his head, as if he considered them not altogether safe companions, and rather expected something "uncanny" to lay hold of him from behind—a process which involved the most horrible contortions of visage, as he carefully abstained from stirring a muscle of his neck or body, but sat bolt upright, his elbows pinned to his sides, and his knees as close together as his stomach would permit, like a huge corpulent Egyptian Memnon—the most ludicrous contrast to the little old man opposite, twisted up together in his Joseph's coat, like some wizard magician in the stories which I was reading. A curious pair of "poles" the two made; the mesothet whereof, by no means a "*punctum indifferens*," but a true connecting spiritual idea, stood on the table—in the whisky-bottle.

Farmer Porter was evidently big with some great thought, and had all a true poet's bashfulness about publishing the fruit of his creative genius. He looked round again at the skinless man, the caricatures, the books; and, as his eye wandered from pile to pile, and shelf to shelf, his face brightened, and he seemed to gain courage.

Solemnly he put his hat on his knees, and began solemnly brushing it with his cuff. Then he saw me watching him, and stopped. Then he put his pipe solemnly on the hob, and cleared his throat for action, while I buried my face in the book.

"Them's a sight o' larned beuks, Muster Mackaye?"

"Humph!"

"Yow maun ha' got a deal o' scholarship among they, noo?"

"Humph!"

"Dee yow think, noo, yow could find out my boy out of un, by any ways o' conjuring like?"

"By what?"

"Conjuring—to strike a perpendicular, noo, or say the Lord's Prayer backwards?"

"Wadna ye prefer a meeracle or twa?" asked Sandy, after a long pull at the whisky-toddy.

"Or a few efreets?" added I.

"Whatsoever you likes, gentlemen. You're best judges, to be sure," answered Farmer Porter, in an awed and helpless voice.

"Aweel—I'm no that disinclined to believe in the occult sciences. I dinna haud a'thegither wi' Salverte. There was mair in them than Magia naturalis, I'm thinking. Mesmerism and magic-lanterns, benj and opium, winna explain all facts, Alton, laddie. Dootless they were an unco' barbaric an' empiric method o' expressing the gran' truth o' man's mastery ower matter. But the interpenetration o' the spiritual an' physical worlds is a gran' truth too; an' aiblins the Deity might ha' allowed witchcraft, just to teach that to puir barbarous folk—signs and wonders, laddie, to mak them believe in somewhat mair than the beasts that perish: an' so ghaists an

warlocks might be a necessary element o' the divine education in dark and carnal times. But I've no read o' a case in which necromancy, nor geomancy, nor coskinomancy, nor ony other mancy, was applied to sic a purpose as this. Unco gude they were, may be, for the discovery o' stolen spunes—but no that o' stolen tailors."

Farmer Porter had listened to this harangue, with mouth and eyes gradually expanding between awe and the desire to comprehend; but at the last sentence his countenance fell.

"So I'm thinking, Mister Porter, that the best witch in siccan a case is ane that ye may find at the police-office."

"Anan?"

"Thae detective police are gran' necromancers an' canny in their way: an' I just took the liberty, a week agone, to ha' a crack wi' ane o' 'em. An noo, gin ye're inclined, we'll leave the whusky awhile, an' gang up to that cave o' Trophawnius, ca'd by the vulgar Bow-street, an' speir for tidings o' the twa lost sheep."

So to Bow-street we went, and found our man, to whom the farmer bowed with obsequiousness most unlike his usual burly independence. He evidently half suspected him to have dealings with the world of spirits: but whether he had such or not, they had been utterly unsuccessful; and we walked back again, with the farmer between us, half-blubbering—

"I tell ye, there's nothing like ganging to a wise 'ooman. Bless ye, I mind one up to Guy Hall, when I was a barn, that two Irish reapers coom down, and murthered her for the money—and if you lost aught she'd vind it, so sure as the church—and a mighty hand to cure burns; and they two villains coom back, after harvest, seventy mile to do it—and when my vather's cows was shrew-struck, she made un be draed under a brimble as growed together at the both ends, she a praying like mad all the time; and they never got nothing but fourteen shilling and a crooked sixpence; for why, the devil carried off all the rest of her money; and I seen um both a-hanging in chains by Wisbeach river, with my own eyes. So when they Irish reapers comes into the vens,

our chaps always says, 'Yow goo to Guy Hall, there's yor brithren a-waitin' for yow,' and that do make um joost mad loike, it do. I tell ye there's nowt like a wise 'ooman, for vinding out the likes o' this."

At this hopeful stage of the argument I left them to go to the Magazine office. As I passed through Covent Garden, a pretty young woman stopped me under a gas-lamp. I was pushing on when I saw it was Jemmy Downes's Irish wife, and saw, too, that she did not recognise me. A sudden instinct made me stop and hear what she had to say.

"Shure, thin, and ye're a tailor, my young man?"

"Yes," I said, nettled a little that my late loathed profession still betrayed itself in my gait.

"From the counthry?"

I nodded, though I dared not speak a white lie to that effect. I fancied that, somehow, through her I might hear of poor Kelly and his friend Porter.

"Ye'll be wanting work, thin?"

"I have no work."

"Och, thin, it's I can show ye the flower o' work, I can. Bedad, there's a shop I know of where ye'll earn—bedad, if ye're the ninth part of a man, let alone a handy young fellow like the looks of you—och, ye'll earn thirty shillings the week, to the very least—an' beautiful lodgings; och, thin, just come and see 'em—as chape as mother's milk! Come along, thin—och, it's the beauty ye are—just the nate figure for a tailor."

The fancy still possessed me; and I went with her through one dingy back street after another. She seemed to be purposely taking an indirect road, to mislead me as to my whereabouts; but after a half-hour's walking, I knew, as well as she, that we were in one of the most miserable slop-working nests of the East-end.

She stopped at a house door, and hurried me in, up to the first floor, and into a dirty, slatternly parlour, smelling infamously of gin; where the first object I beheld was Jemmy Downes, sitting before the fire, three-parts drunk, with a couple of dirty, squalling children on the hearth-rug, whom he was kicking and cuffing alternately.

"Och, thin, ye villain, beating the poor darlints whinever I lave ye a minute." And pouring out a volley of Irish curses, she caught up the urchins, one under each arm, and kissed and hugged them till they were nearly choked. "Och, ye plague o' my life—as drunk as a baste; an' I brought home this darlint of a young gentleman to help ye in the business."

Downes got up, and steadying himself by the table, leered at me with lacklustre eyes, and attempted a little ceremonious politeness. How this was to end I did not see; but I was determined to carry it through, on the chance of success, infinitely small as that might be.

"An' I've told him thirty shillings a week's the least he'll earn; and charge for board and lodgings only seven shillings."

"Thirty!—she lies; she's always a lying; don't you mind her. Five-and-forty is the werry lowest figure. Ask my respectable and most piousest partner, Shemei Solomons. Why, blow me—it's Locke!"

"Yes, it is Locke; and surely you're my old friend Jemmy Downes? Shake hands. What an unexpected pleasure to meet you again!"

"Werry unexpected pleasure. Tip us your daddle! Delighted—delighted, as I was a saying, to be of the least use to yer. Take a caulker? Summat heavy, then? No? 'Tak' a drap o' kindness yet, for auld langsyne?"

"You forget I was always a teetotaller."

"Ay," with a look of unfeigned pity. "An' you're a going to lend us a hand? Oh, ah! perhaps you'd like to begin? Here's a most beautiful uniform, now, for a markis in her Majesty's Guards; we don't mention names —tarn't businesslike. P'r'aps you'd like best to work here to-night, for company—'for auld langsyne, my boys;' and I'll introduce yer to the gents up-stairs to-morrow."

"No," I said; "I'll go up at once, if you've no objection."

"Och, thin, but the sheets isn't aired—no—faix; and I'm thinking the gentleman as is a going isn't gone yet."

But I insisted on going up at once; and, grumbling, she followed me. I stopped on the landing of the second

floor, and asked which way; and seeing her in no hurry to answer, opened a door, inside which I heard the hum of many voices, saying in as sprightly a tone as I could muster, that I supposed that was the workroom.

As I had expected, a fetid, choking den, with just room enough in it for the seven or eight sallow, starved beings, who, coatless, shoeless, and ragged, sat stitching, each on his truckle-bed. I glanced round; the man whom I sought was not there.

My heart fell; why it had ever risen to such a pitch of hope I cannot tell; and half-cursing myself for a fool, in thus wildly thrusting my head into a squabble, I turned back and shut the door, saying—

"A very pleasant room, ma'am, but a leetle too crowded."

Before she could answer, the opposite door opened; and a face appeared—unwashed, unshaven, shrunken to a skeleton. I did not recognise it at first.

"Blessed Vargen! but that wasn't your voice, Locke?"

"And who are you?"

"Tear and ages! and he don't know Mike Kelly!"

My first impulse was to catch him up in my arms, and run down-stairs with him. I controlled myself, however, not knowing how far he might be in his tyrant's power. But his voluble Irish heart burst out at once—

"Oh! blessed saints, take me out o' this! take me out for the love of Jesus! take me out o' this hell, or I'll go mad intirely! Och! will nobody have pity on poor sowls in purgatory—here in prison like negur slaves? We're starved to the bone, we are, and kilt intirely with cowld."

And as he clutched my arm, with his long, skinny, trembling fingers, I saw that his hands and feet were all chapped and bleeding. Neither shoe nor stocking did he possess; his only garments were a ragged shirt and trousers; and—and, and in horrible mockery of his own misery, a grand new flowered satin vest, which to-morrow was to figure in some gorgeous shop-window!

"Och! Mother of Heaven!" he went on, wildly, "when will I get out to the fresh air? For five months I

haven't seen the blessed light of sun, nor spoken to the praste, nor ate a bit o' mate, barring bread-and-butter. Shure, it's all the blessed Sabbaths and saints' days I've been a working like a haythen Jew, an niver seen the insides o' the chapel to confess my sins, and me poor sowl's lost intirely—and they've pawned the relaver* this fifteen weeks, and not a boy of us iver sot foot in the street since."

"Vot's that row?" roared at this juncture Downes's voice from below.

"Och, thin," shrieked the woman, "here's that thief o' the warld, Micky Kelly, slandhering o' us afore the blessed heaven, and he owing £2. 14*s.* ½*d.* for his board an' lodging, let alone pawn-tickets, and goin' to rin away, the black-hearted ongrateful sarpent!" And she began yelling indiscriminately, "Thieves!" "Murder!" "Blasphemy!" and such other ejaculations, which (the English ones at least) had not the slightest reference to the matter in hand.

"I'll come to him!" said Downes, with an oath, and rushed stumbling up the stairs, while the poor wretch sneaked in again, and slammed the door to. Downes battered at it, but was met with a volley of curses from the men inside; while, profiting by the Babel, I blew out the light, ran down-stairs, and got safe into the street.

In two hours afterwards, Mackaye, Porter, Crossthwaite, and I were at the door, accompanied by a policeman, and a search-warrant. Porter had insisted on accompanying us. He had made up his mind that his son was at Downes's; and all representations of the smallness of his chance were fruitless. He worked himself up into a state of complete frenzy, and flourished a huge stick in a way which shocked the policeman's orderly and legal notions.

"That may do very well down in your country, sir; but you arn't a goin' to use that there weapon here, you know, not by no hact o' Parliament as I knows on."

* A coat, we understand, which is kept by the coatless wretches in these sweaters' dungeons, to be used by each of them in turn when they want to go out.—EDITOR.

"Ow, it's joost a way I ha' wi' me." And the stick was quiet for fifty yards or so, and then recommenced smashing imaginary skulls.

"You'll do somebody a mischief, sir, with that. You'd much better a lend it me."

Porter tucked it under his arm for fifty yards more; and so on, till we reached Downes's house.

The policeman knocked: and the door was opened, cautiously, by an old Jew, of a most un-"Caucasian" cast of features, however "high-nosed," as Mr. Disraeli has it.

The policeman asked to see Michael Kelly.

"Michaelsh? I do't know such nameshn——" But before the parley could go farther, the farmer burst past policeman and Jew, and rushed into the passage, roaring, in a voice which made the very windows rattle,

"Billy Poorter! Billy Poorter! whor be yow? whor bo yow?"

We all followed him up-stairs, in time to see him charging valiantly, with his stick for a bayonet, the small person of a Jew-boy, who stood at the head of the stairs in a scientific attitude. The young rascal planted a dozen blows in the huge carcase—he might as well have thumped the rhinoceros in the Regent's Park; the old man ran right over him, without stopping, and dashed up the stairs; at the head of which—oh, joy!—appeared a long, shrunken, red-haired figure, the tears on its dirty cheeks glittering in the candle-glare. In an instant father and son were in each other's arms.

"Oh, my barn! my barn! my barn! my barn!" And then the old Hercules held him off at arm's length, and looked at him with a wistful face, and hugged him again with "My barn! my barn!" He had nothing else to say. Was it not enough? And poor Kelly danced frantically around them, hurrahing; his own sorrows forgotten in his friend's deliverance.

The Jew-boy shook himself, turned, and darted down stairs past us; the policeman quietly put out his foot, tripped him headlong, and jumping down after him, extracted from his grasp a heavy pocket-book.

"Ah! my dear mothersh's dying gift! Oh, dear! oh dear! give it back to a poor orphansh!"

"Didn't I see you take it out o' the old un's pocket, you young villain?" answered the maintainer of order, as he shoved the book into his bosom, and stood with one foot on his writhing victim, a complete nineteenth-century St. Michael.

"Let me hold him," I said, "while you go up-stairs."

"*You* hold a Jew-boy!—you hold a mad cat!" answered the policeman, contemptuously—and with justice—for at that moment Downes appeared on the first-floor landing, cursing and blaspheming.

"He's my 'prentice! he's my servant! I've got a bond, with his own hand to it, to serve me for three years. I'll have the law of you—I will!"

Then the meaning of the big stick came out. The old man leapt down the stairs, and seized Downes. "You're the tyrant as has locked my barn up here!" And a thrashing commenced, which it made my bones ache only to look at. Downes had no chance; the old man felled him on his face in a couple of blows, and taking both hands to his stick, hewed away at him as if he had been a log.

"I waint hit a's head! I waint hit a's head!—whack, whack. "Let me be!"—whack, whack—puff. "It does me gude, it does me gude!"—puff, puff, puff—whack. I've been a bottling of it up for three years, come Whitsuntide!"—whack, whack, whack—while Mackaye and Crossthwaite stood coolly looking on, and the wife shut herself up in the side-room, and screamed "Murder!"

The unhappy policeman stood at his wits' end, between the prisoner below and the breach of the peace above, bellowing in vain, in the Queen's name, to us, and to the grinning tailors on the landing. At last, as Downes's life seemed in danger, he wavered; the Jew-boy seized the moment, jumped up, upsetting the constable, dashed like an eel between Crossthwaite and Mackaye, gave me a back-handed blow in passing, which I felt for a week after, and vanished through the street-door, which he locked after him.

"Very well!" said the functionary, rising solemnly, and pulling out a note-book—"Scar under left eye, nose a little twisted to the right, bad chilblains on the hands. You'll keep till next time, young man. Now, you fat gentleman up there, have you done a qualifying of yourself for Newgate?"

The old man had ran up-stairs again, and was hugging his son; but when the policeman lifted Downes, he rushed back to his victim, and begged, like a great school-boy, for leave to "bet him joost won bit moor."

"Let me bet un! I'll pay un!—I'll pay all as my son owes un! Marcy me! where's my pooss?" And so on raged the Babel, till we got the two poor fellows safe out of the house. We had to break open the door to do it, thanks to that imp of Israel.

"For God's sake, take us too!" almost screamed five or six other voices.

"They're all in debt—every onesh; they sha'n't go till they paysh, if there's law in England," whined the old Jew, who had re-appeared.

"I'll pay for 'em—I'll pay every farden, if so be as they treated my boy well. Here, you, Mr. Locke, there's the ten pounds as I promised you. Why, whor is my pooss?"

The policeman solemnly handed it to him. He took it, turned it over, looked at the policeman half frightened, and pointed with his fat thumb at Mackaye.

"Well, he said as you was a conjuror—and sure he was right."

He paid me the money. I had no mind to keep it in such company; so I got the poor fellows' pawn-tickets, and Crossthwaite and I took the things out for them. When we returned, we found them in a group in the passage, holding the door open, in their fear lest we should be locked up, or entrapped in some way. Their spirits seemed utterly broken. Some three or four went off to lodge where they could; the majority went up-stairs again to work. That, even that dungeon, was their only home—their only hope—as it is of thousands of "free" Englishmen at this moment.

We returned, and found the old man with his new-found prodigal sitting on his knee, as if he had been a baby. Sandy told me afterwards, that he had scarcely kept him from carrying the young man all the way home; he was convinced that the poor fellow was dying of starvation. I think really he was not far wrong. In the corner sat Kelly, crouched together like a baboon, blubbering, hurrahing, invoking the saints, cursing the sweaters, and blessing the present company. We were afraid, for several days, that his wits were seriously affected.

And, in his old arm-chair, pipe in mouth, sat good Sandy Mackaye, wiping his eyes with the many-coloured sleeve, and moralizing to himself, *sotto voce:*

"The auld Romans made slaves o' their debitors; sae did the Anglo-Saxons, for a' good Major Cartwright has writ to the contrary. But I didna ken the same Christian practice was part o' the Breetish constitution. Aweel, aweel—atween Riot Acts, Government by Commissions, and ither little extravagants and codicils o' Mammon's making, it's no that easy to ken, the day, what is the Breetish constitution, and what isn't. Tak a drappie, Billy Porter, lad?"

"Never again so long as I live. I've learnt a lesson and a half about that, these last few months."

"Aweel, moderation's best, but abstinence better than naething. Nae man shall deprive me o' my leeberty, but I'll tempt nae man to gie up his." And he actually put the whisky-bottle by into the cupboard.

The old man and his son went home next day, promising me, if I would but come to see them, "twa hundert acres o' the best partridge-shooting, and wild dooks as plenty as sparrows; and to live in clover till I bust, if I liked." And so, as Bunyan has it, they went on their way, and I saw them no more.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN EMERSONIAN SERMON.

CERTAINLY, if John Crossthwaite held the victim-of-circumstance doctrine in theory, he did not allow Mike Kelly to plead it in practice, as an extenuation of his misdeeds. Very different from his Owenite "it's-nobody's-fault" harangues in the debating society, or his admiration for the teacher of whom my readers shall have a glimpse shortly, was his lecture that evening to the poor Irishmen on "It's all your own fault." Unhappy Kelly! he sat there like a beaten cur, looking first at one of us, and then at the other, for mercy, and finding none. As soon as Crossthwaite's tongue was tired, Mackaye's began, on the sins of drunkenness, hastiness, improvidence, over-trustfulness, &c., &c., and, above all, on the cardinal offence of not having signed the protest years before, and spurned the dishonourable trade, as we had done. Even his most potent excuse that "a boy must live somehow," Crossthwaite treated as contemptuously as if he had been a very Leonidas, while Mackaye chimed in with—

"An' ye a Papist! ye talk o' praying to saints an' martyrs, that died in torments because they wad na do what they should na do? What ha' ye to do wi' martyrs?—a meeserable wretch that sells his soul for a mess o' pottage—four slices per diem o' thin bread-and-butter? Et propter veetam veevendi perdere causas! Dinna tell me o' your hardships—ye've had your deserts—your rights were just equivalent to your mights, an' so ye got them."

"Faix, thin, Misther Mackaye, darlint, an' whin did I desarve to pawn me own goose an' board, an' sit looking at the spidhers for the want o' them?"

"Pawn his ain goose! Pawn himsel! pawn his needle—gin it had been worth the pawning, they'd ha' ta'en it. An' yet there's a command in Deuteronomy, Ye shall na tak the millstone in pledge, for it's a man's life; nor yet keep his raiment ower night, but gie it the puir body back, that he may sleep in his ain claes, an' bless ye. O—but pawnbrokers dinna care for blessings—na marketable value in them, whatsoever."

"And the shopkeeper," said I, "in 'the Arabian Nights,' refuses to take the fisherman's net in pledge, because he gets his living thereby."

"Ech! but, laddie, they were puir legal Jews, under carnal ordinances, an' daur na even tak an honest five per cent interest for their money. An' the baker o' Bagdad, why he was a benighted heathen, ye ken, an' deceivit by that fause prophet, Mahomet, to his eternal damnation, or he wad never ha' gone aboot to fancy a fisherman was his brither."

"Faix, an' ain't we all brothers?" asked Kelly.

"Ay, and no," said Sandy, with an expression which would have been a smile, but for its depths of bitter earnestness; "brethren in Christ, my laddie."

"An' ain't that all over the same?"

"Ask the preachers. Gin they meant brothers, they'd say brothers, be sure; but because they don't mean brothers at a', they say brethren—ye'll mind, brethren—to soun' antiquate, an' professional, an' perfunctory-like, for fear it should be ower real, an' practical, an' startling, an' a' that; and then jist limit it down wi' a 'in Christ,' for fear o' owre wide applications, and a' that. But

> For a' that, and a' that.
> It's comin' yet, for a' that,
> When man an' man, the warld owre,
> Shall brothers be, for a' that—

An' na brithren any mair at a'!"

"An' didn't the blessed Jesus die for all?"

"What? for heretics, Micky?"

"Bedad, thin, an' I forgot that intirely!"

"Of course you did! It's strange, laddie," said he, turning to me, "that that Name suld be everywhere, fra the thunderers o' Exeter Ha' to this puir, feckless Paddy, the watchword o' exclusiveness. I'm thinking ye'll no find the workmen believe in't, till somebody can fin' the plan o' making it the sign o' universal comprehension. Gin I had na seen in my youth that a brither in Christ meant less a thousand-fold than a brither out o' him, I might ha' believit the noo—we'll no say what. I've an owre great organ o' marvellousness, an' o' veneration too, I'm afeard."

"Ah!" said Crossthwaite, "you should come and hear Mr. Windrush to-night, about the all-embracing benevolence of the Deity, and the abomination of limiting it by all those narrow creeds and dogmas."

"An' wha's Meester Windrush, then?"

"Oh, he's an American; he was a Calvinist preacher originally, I believe; but, as he told us last Sunday evening, he soon cast away the worn-out vestures of an obsolete faith, which were fast becoming only crippling fetters."

"An' ran oot sarkless on the public, eh? I'm afeard there's mony a man else that throws awa' the gude auld plaid o' Scots Puritanism, an' is unco fain to cover his nakedness wi' ony cast popinjay's feathers he can forgather wi'. Aweel, aweel—a puir priestless age it is, the noo. We'll e'en gang hear him the nicht, Alton, laddie; ye ha' na darkened the kirk door this mony a day—nor I neither, mair by token."

It was too true. I had utterly given up the whole problem of religion as insoluble. I believed in poetry, science, and democracy—and they were enough for me then; enough, at least, to leave a mighty hunger in my heart, I knew not for what. And as for Mackaye, though brought up, as he told me, a rigid Scotch Presbyterian, he had gradually ceased to attend the church of his fathers.

"It was no the kirk o' his fathers—the auld God-trusting kirk that Clavers dragoonit down by burns and

muirsides. It was a' gane dead an' dry; a piece of Auld-Bailey barristration anent soul-saving dodges. What did he want wi' proofs o' the being o' God, an' o' the doctrine o' original sin? He could see eneugh o' them ayont the shop-door, ony tide. They made puir Rabbie Burns an anything-arian, wi' their blethers, an' he was near gaun the same gate."

And, besides, he absolutely refused to enter any place of worship where there were pews. "He wadna follow after a multitude to do evil; he wad na gang before his Maker wi' a lee in his right hand. Nae wonder folks were so afraid o' the names o' equality an' britherhood, when they'd kicked them out e'en o' the kirk o' God. Pious folks may ca' me a sinfu' auld Atheist. They winna gang to a harmless stage play—an' richt they—for fear o' countenancing the sin that's dune there, an' I winna gang to the kirk, for fear o' countenancing the sin that's dune there, by putting down my hurdies on that stool o' antichrist, a haspit pew!"

I was, therefore, altogether surprised at the promptitude with which he agreed to go and hear Crossthwaite's new-found prophet. His reasons for so doing may be, I think, gathered from the conversation towards the end of this chapter.

Well, we went; and I, for my part, was charmed with Mr. Windrush's eloquence. His style, which was altogether Emersonian, quite astonished me by its alternate bursts of what I considered brilliant declamation, and of forcible epigrammatic antithesis. I do not deny that I was a little startled by some of his doctrines, and suspected that he had not seen much, either of St. Giles's cellars or tailors' workshops either, when he talked of sin as "only a lower form of good. Nothing," he informed us, "was produced in nature without pain and disturbance; and what we had been taught to call sin was, in fact, nothing but the birth-throes attendant on the progress of the species.—As for the devil, Novalis, indeed, had gone so far as to suspect him to be a necessary illusion. Novalis was a mystic, and tainted by the old creeds. The illusion was not necessary—it was disap-

pearing before the fast-approaching meridian light of philosophic religion. Like the myths of Christianity, it had grown up in an age of superstition, when men, blind to the wondrous order of the universe, believed that supernatural beings, like the Homeric gods, actually interfered in the affairs of mortals. Science had revealed the irrevocability of the laws of nature—was man alone to be exempt from them? No. The time would come when it would be as obsolete an absurdity to talk of the temptation of a fiend, as it was now to talk of the wehr-wolf, or the angel of the thunder-cloud. The metaphor might remain, doubtless, as a metaphor, in the domain of poetry, whose office was to realize, in objective symbols, the subjective ideas of the human intellect; but philosophy, and the pure sentiment of religion, which found all things, even God himself, in the recesses of its own enthusiastic heart, must abjure such a notion."

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"What!" he asked again, "shall all nature be a harmonious whole, reflecting, in every drop of dew which gems the footsteps of the morning, the infinite love and wisdom of its Maker, and man alone be excluded from his part in that concordant choir? Yet such is the doctrine of the advocates of free-will, and of sin—its phantom-bantling. Man disobey his Maker! disarrange and break the golden wheels and springs of the infinite machine! The thought were blasphemy!—impossibility! All things fulfil their destiny; and so does man, in a higher or lower sphere of being. Shall I punish the robber? Shall I curse the profligate? As soon destroy the toad, because my partial taste may judge him ugly; or doom to hell, for his carnivorous appetite, the muscanonge of my native lakes! Toad is not horrible to toad, or thief to thief. Philanthropists or statesmen may environ him with more genial circumstances, and so enable his propensities to work more directly for the good of society; but to punish him—to punish nature for daring to be nature!—Never! I may thank the Upper Destinies that they have not made me as other men are—that they have endowed me with nobler instincts, a

more delicate conformation than the thief; but I have my part to play, and he has his. Why should we wish to be other than the All-wise has made us?"

"Fine doctrine that," grumbled Sandy; "gin ye've first made up your mind wi' the Pharisee, that ye *are* no like ither men."

"Shall I pray, then? For what? I will coax none, flatter none—not even the Supreme! I will not be absurd enough to wish to change that order, by which sun and stars, saints and sinners, alike fulfil their destinies. There is one comfort, my friends; coax and flatter as we will, he will not hear us."

"Pleasant, for puir deevils like us!" quoth Mackaye.

"What then remains? Thanks, thanks—not of words, but of actions. Worship is a life, not a ceremony. He who would honour the Supreme, let him cheerfully succumb to the destiny which the Supreme has allotted, and, like the shell or the flower—('Or the pickpocket,' added Mackaye, almost audibly)—become the happy puppet of the universal impulse. He who would honour Christ, let him become a Christ himself! Theodore of Mopsuestia—born, alas! before his time—a prophet for whom as yet no audience stood ready in the amphitheatre of souls—'Christ!' he was wont to say; 'I can become Christ myself, if I will.' Become thou Christ, my brother! He has an idea—the idea of utter submission—abnegation of his own fancied will before the supreme necessities. Fulfil that idea, and thou art he! Deny thyself, and then only wilt thou be a reality; for thou hast no self. If thou hadst a self, thou wouldst but lie in denying it—and would The Being thank thee for denying what he had given thee? But thou hast none! God is circumstance, and thou his creature! Be content! Fear not, strive not, change not, repent not! Thou art nothing! Be nothing, and thou becomest a part of all things!"

And so Mr. Windrush ended his discourse, which Crossthwaite had been all the while busily taking down in short-hand, for the edification of the readers of a certain periodical, and also for those of this my Life.

I plead guilty to having been entirely carried away by

what I heard. There was so much which was true, so much more which seemed true, so much which it would have been convenient to believe true, and all put so eloquently and originally, as I then considered, that, in short, I was in raptures, and so was poor dear Crossthwaite; and as we walked home, we dinned Mr. Windrush's praises one into each of Mackaye's ears. The old man, however, paced on silent and meditative. At last—

"A hunder sects or so in the land o' Gret Britain; an' a hunder or so single preachers, each man a sect of his ain! an' this the last fashion! Last, indeed! The moon of Calvinism's far gone in the fourth quarter, when it's come to the like o' that. Truly, the soul-saving business is a'thegither fa'n to a low ebb, as Master Tummas says somewhere!"

"Well, but," asked Crossthwaite, "was not that man, at least, splendid?"

"An' hoo much o' thae gran' objectives an' subjectives did ye comprehen', then, Johnnie, my man?"

"Quite enough for me," answered John, in a somewhat nettled tone.

"An' sae did I."

"But you ought to hear him often. You can't judge of his system from one sermon, in this way."

"Seestem! and what's that like?"

"Why, he has a plan for uniting all sects and parties, on the one broad fundamental ground of the unity of God as revealed by science——"

"Verra like uniting o' men by just pu'ing aff their claes, and telling 'em, 'There, ye're a' brithers noo, on the one broad fundamental principle o' want o' breeks.'"

"Of course," went on Crossthwaite, without taking notice of this interruption, "he allows full liberty of conscience. All he wishes for is the emancipation of intellect. He will allow every one, he says, to realize that idea to himself, by the representations which suit him best."

"An' so he has no objection to a wee playing at Papistry, gin a man finds it good to tickle up his soul?"

"Ay, he did speak of that—what did he call it? Oh!

'one of the ways in which the Christian idea naturally embodied itself in imaginative minds!' but the higher intellects, of course, would want fewer helps of that kind. 'They would see'—ay, that was it—'the pure white light of truth, without requiring those coloured refracting media.'"

"That wad depend muckle on whether the light o' truth chose or not, I'm thinking. But, Johnnie, lad—guide us and save us!—whaur got ye a' these grau' outlandish words the nicht?"

"Haven't I been taking down every one of these lectures for the press?"

"The press gang to the father o't—and you too, for lending your han' in the matter—for a mair accursed aristocrat I never heerd, sin' I first ate haggis. Oh, ye gowk—ye gowk! Dinna ye see what be the upshot o' siccan doctrin'? That every puir fellow as has no gret brains in his head will be left to his superstition, an' his ignorance to fulfil the lusts o' his flesh; while the few that are geniuses, or fancy themselves sae, are to ha' the monopoly o' this private still o' philosophy—these carbonari, illuminati, vehmgericht, samothracian mysteries o' bottled moonshine. An' when that comes to pass, I'll just gang back to my schule and my catechism, and begin again wi' 'who was born o' the Virgin Mary, suffered oonder Pontius Pilate!' Hech! lads, there's no subjectives and objectives there, na beggarly, windy abstractions, but joost a plain fact, that God cam' down to look for puir bodies, instead o' leaving puir bodies to gang looking for Him. An' here's a pretty place to be left looking for Him in—between gin shops and gutters! A pretty Gospel for the publicans an' harlots, to tell 'em that if their bairns are canny eneugh, they may possibly some day be allowed to believe that there is one God, and not twa! And then, by way of practical application—'Hech! my dear, starving, simple brothers, ye manna be sae owre conscientious, and gang fashing yourselves anent being brutes an' deevils, for the gude God's made ye sae, and He's verra weel content to see you sae, gin ye be content or no.'"

"Then, do you believe in the old doctrines of Christianity?" I asked.

"Dinna speir what I believe in. I canna tell ye. I've been seventy years trying to believe in God, and to meet anither man that believed in him. So I'm just like the Quaker o' the town o' Redcross, that met by himself every First-day in his ain hoose."

"Well, but," I asked again, "is not complete freedom of thought a glorious aim—to emancipate man's noblest part—the intellect—from the trammels of custom and ignorance?"

"Intellect—intellect!" rejoined he, according to his fashion, catching one up at a word, and playing on that in order to answer, not what one said, but what one's words led to. "I'm sick o' all the talk anent intellect I hear noo. An' what's the use o' intellect? 'Aristocracy o' intellect,' they cry. Curse a' aristocracies—intellectual anes, as well as anes o' birth, or rank, or money! What! will I ca' a man my superior, because he's cleverer than mysel?—will I boo down to a bit o' brains, ony mair than to a stock or a stane? Let a man prove himsel' better than me, my laddie—honester, humbler, kinder, wi' mair sense o' the duty o' man, an' the weakness o' man—and that man I'll acknowledge—that man's my king, my leader, though he war as stupid as Eppe Dalgleish, that could na count five on her fingers, and yet keepit her drucken father by her ain hands' labour for twenty-three yeers."

We could not agree to all this, but we made a rule of never contradicting the old sage in one of his excited moods, for fear of bringing on a week's silent fit—a state which generally ended in his smoking himself into a bilious melancholy; but I made up my mind to be henceforth a frequent auditor of Mr. Windrush's oratory.

"An' sae the deevil's dead!" said Sandy, half to himself, as he sat crooning and smoking that night over the fire. "Gone at last, puir fallow!—an' he sae little appreciated, too! Every gowk laying his ain sins on Nickie's back, puir Nickie!—verra like that much misunderstood politeecian, Mr. John Cade, as Charles Buller ca'd him in the

Hoose o' Commons—an' he to be dead at last! the warld 'll seem quite unco without his auld-farrant phizog on the streets. Aweel, aweel—aiblins he's but shammin'.——

When pleasant Spring came on apace,
And showers began to fa',
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surprised them a'.

At ony rate, I'd no bury him till he began smell a wee strong like. It's a grewsome thing, is premature interment, Alton, laddie!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.

BUT all this while, my slavery to Mr. O'Flynn's party-spirit and coarseness was becoming daily more and more intolerable—an explosion was inevitable; and an explosion came.

Mr. O'Flynn found out that I had been staying at Cambridge, and at a cathedral city too; and it was quite a godsend to him to find any one who knew a word about the institutions at which he had been railing weekly for years. So nothing would serve him but my writing a set of articles on the universities, as a prelude to one on the Cathedral Establishments. In vain I pleaded the shortness of my stay there, and the smallness of my information.

"Och, were not abuses notorious? And couldn't I get them up out of any Radical paper—and just put in a little of my own observations, and a dashing personal cut or two, to spice the thing up, and give it an original look? and if I did not choose to write that—why," with an enormous oath, "I should write nothing." So—for I was growing weaker and weaker, and indeed my hack-writing was breaking down my moral sense, as it does that of most men—I complied; and burning with vexation, feeling myself almost guilty of a breach of trust toward those from whom I had received nothing but kindness, I scribbled off my first number and sent it to the editor—to see it appear next week, three-parts re-written, and every fact of my own furnishing twisted and misapplied, till the whole thing was as vulgar and commonplace a

piece of rant as ever disgraced the people's cause. And all this, in spite of a solemn promise, confirmed by a volley of oaths, that I "should say what I liked, and speak my whole mind, as one who had seen things with his own eyes had a right to do."

Furious, I set off to the editor; and not only my pride, but what literary conscience I had left, was stirred to the bottom by seeing myself made, whether I would or not, a blackguard and a slanderer.

As it was ordained, Mr. O'Flynn was gone out for an hour or two; and, unable to settle down to any work till I had fought my battle with him fairly out, I wandered onward, towards the West End, staring into print-shop windows, and meditating on many things.

As it was ordained, also, I turned up Regent Street, and into Langham Place; when, at the door of All-Souls Church, behold a crowd and a long string of carriages arriving, and all the pomp and glory of a grand wedding.

I joined the crowd from mere idleness, and somehow found myself in the first rank, just as the bride was stepping out of the carriage—it was Miss Staunton; and the old gentleman who handed her out was no other than the dean. They were, of course, far too deeply engaged to recognise insignificant little me, so that I could stare as thoroughly to my heart's content as any of the butcher-boys and nursery-maids around me.

She was closely veiled—but not too closely to prevent my seeing her magnificent lip and nostril curling with pride, resolve, rich tender passion. Her glorious black-brown hair—the true "purple locks" which Homer so often talks of—rolled down beneath her veil in great heavy ringlets; and with her tall and rounded figure, and step as firm and queenly as if she were going to a throne, she seemed to me the very ideal of those magnificent Eastern Zubeydehs and Nourmahals, whom I used to dream of after reading the "Arabian Nights."

As they entered the doorway, almost touching me, she looked round, as if for some one. The dean whispered something in his gentle, stately way, and she answered by one of those looks so intense, and yet so bright, so full of

unutterable depths of meaning and emotion, that, in spite of all my antipathy, I felt an admiration akin to awe thrill through me, and gazed after her so intently, that Lillian —Lillian herself—was at my side, and almost passed me before I was aware of it.

Yes, there she was, the foremost among a bevy of fair girls, "herself the fairest far," all April smiles and tears, golden curls, snowy rosebuds, and hovering clouds of lace —a fairy queen; —but yet—but yet—how shallow that hazel eye, how empty of meaning those delicate features, compared with the strength and intellectual richness of the face which had preceded her!.

It was too true—I had never remarked it before; but now it flashed across me like lightning—and like lightning vanished; for Lillian's eye caught mine, and there was the faintest spark of a smile of recognition, and pleased surprise, and a nod. I blushed scarlet with delight; some servant-girl or other, who stood next to me, had seen it too—quick-eyed that women are—and was looking curiously at me. I turned, I knew not why, in my delicious shame, and plunged through the crowd to hide I knew not what.

I walked on—poor fool—in an ecstasy; the whole world was transfigured in my eyes, and virtue and wisdom beamed from every face I passed. The omnibus-horses were racers, and the drivers—were they not my brothers of the people? The very policemen looked sprightly and philanthropic. I shook hands earnestly with the crossing-sweeper of the Regent Circus, gave him my last two-pence, and rushed on, like a young David, to exterminate that Philistine O'Flynn.

Ah well! I was a great fool, as others too have been; but yet, that little chance-meeting did really raise me. It made me sensible that I was made for better things than low abuse of the higher classes. It gave me courage to speak out, and act without fear of consequences; once at least in that confused facing-both-ways period of my life. O woman! woman! only true missionary of civilization and brotherhood, and gentle, forgiving charity; is it in thy power, and perhaps in thine only, to bind up the

broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives! One real lady, who should dare to stoop, what might she not do with us—with our sisters? If——

There are hundreds, answers the reader, who do stoop. Elizabeth Fry was a lady, well-born, rich, educated, and she has many scholars.

True, my dear readers, true—and may God bless her and her scholars. Do you think the working men forget them? But look at St. Giles's, or Spitalfields, or Shadwell, and say, is not the harvest plentiful, and the labourers, alas! few? No one asserts that nothing is done; the question is, is enough done? Does the supply of mercy meet the demand of misery? Walk into the next court and see!

* * * * * *

I found Mr. O'Flynn in his sanctum, busy with paste and scissors, in the act of putting in a string of advertisements—indecent French novels, Atheistic tracts, quack medicines, and slopsellers' puffs; and commenced with as much dignity as I could muster:

"What on earth do you mean, sir, by re-writing my article?"

"What—(in the other place)—do you mean by giving me the trouble of re-writing it? Me head's splitting now with sitting up, cutting out, and putting in. Poker o' Moses! but ye'd given it an intirely aristocratic tendency. What did ye mane" (and three or four oaths rattled out) "by talking about the pious intentions of the original founders, and the democratic tendencies of monastic establishments?"

"I wrote it because I thought it."

"Is that any reason ye should write it? And there was another bit, too—it made my hair stand on end when I saw it, to think how near I was sending the copy to press without looking at it—something about a French Socialist, and Church Property."

"Oh! you mean, I suppose, the story of the French Socialist, who told me that church property was just the only property in England which he would spare, because it was the only one which had definite duties attached to

it; that the real devourers of the people were not the bishops, who, however rich, were at least bound to work in return for their riches, but the landlords and millionaires, who refused to confess the duties of property, while they raved about its rights."

"Bedad, that's it; and pretty doctrine, too!"

"But it's true: it's an entirely new and a very striking notion, and I consider it my duty to mention it."

"Thrue! What the devil does that matter? There's a time to speak the truth, and a time not, isn't there? It'll make a grand hit, now, in a leader upon the Irish Church question, to back the prastes against the landlords. But if I'd let that in as it stood, bedad, I'd have lost three parts of my subscribers the next week. Every soul of the Independents, let alone the Chartists, would have bid me good morning. Now do, like a good boy, give us something more the right thing next time. Draw it strong.—A good drunken supper-party and a police-row; if ye haven't seen one, get it up out of Pater Priggins—or Laver might do, if the other wasn't convanient. That's Dublin, to be sure, but one university's just like another. And give us a seduction or two, and a brace of Dons carried home drunk from Barnwell by the Procthors."

"Really I never saw anything of the kind; and as for profligacy amongst the Dons, I don't believe it exists. I'll call them idle, and bigoted, and careless of the morals of the young men, because I know that they are so; but as for anything more, I believe them to be as sober, respectable a set of Pharisees as the world ever saw."

Mr. O'Flynn was waxing warm, and the bully-vein began fast to show itself.

"I don't care a curse, sir! My subscribers won't stand it, and they sha'n't! I am a man of business, sir, and a man of the world, sir, and faith that's more than you are, and I know what will sell the paper, and by J——s I'll let no upstart spalpeen dictate to me!"

"Then I'll tell you what, sir," quoth I, waxing warm in my turn, "I don't know which are the greater rogues, you or your subscribers. You a patriot? You are a

humbug. Look at those advertisements, and deny it if you can. Crying out for education, and helping to debauch the public mind with Voltaire's 'Candide,' and Eugène Sue—swearing by Jesus, and puffing Atheism and blasphemy—yelling at a quack government, quack law, quack priesthoods, and then dirtying your fingers with half-crowns for advertising Holloway's ointment and Parr's life pills—shrieking about slavery of labour to capital, and inserting Moses and Son's doggerel—ranting about searching investigations and the march of knowledge, and concealing every fact which cannot be made to pander to the passions of your dupes—extolling the freedom of the press, and showing yourself in your own office a tyrant and a censor of the press. You a patriot? You the people's friend? You are doing everything in your power to blacken the people's cause in the eyes of their enemies. You are simply a humbug, a hypocrite, and a scoundrel; and so I bid you good morning."

Mr. O'Flynn had stood, during this harangue, speechless with passion, those loose lips of his wreathing like a pair of earthworms. It was only when I stopped that he regained his breath, and with a volley of incoherent oaths, caught up his chair and hurled it at my head. Luckily, I had seen enough of his temper already, to keep my hand on the lock of the door for the last five minutes. I darted out of the room quicker than I ever did out of one before or since. The chair took effect on the luckless door; and as I threw a flying glance behind me, I saw one leg sticking through the middle panel, in a way that augured ill for my skull, had it been in the way of Mr. O'Flynn's fury.

I ran home to Mackaye in a state of intense self-glorification, and told him the whole story. He chuckled, he crowed, he hugged me to his bosom.

"Leeze me o' ye! but I kenned ye were o' the true Norse blude after a'!

For a' that, an' a' that,
A man's a man for a' that.

Oh, but I hae expeckit it this month an' mare! Oh, but I prophesied it, Johnnie!"

"Then why, in Heaven's name, did you introduce me to such a scoundrel?"

"I sent you to schule, lad, I sent you to schule. Ye wad na be ruled by me. Ye tuk me for a puir doited auld misanthrope; an' I thocht to gie ye the meat ye lusted after, an' fill ye wi' the fruit o' your ain desires. An' noo that ye've gane doon in the fire o' temptation, an' conquered, here's your reward standin' ready. Special prawvidences!—wha can doot them? I ha' had mony—miracles I might ca' them, to see how they cam' just when I was gaun daft wi' despair."

And then he told me that the editor of a popular journal, of the Howitt and Eliza Cook school, had called on me that morning, and promised me work enough, and pay enough, to meet all present difficulties.

I did indeed accept the curious coincidence, if not as a reward for an act of straightforwardness, in which I saw no merit, at least as proof that the upper powers had not altogether forgotten me. I found both the editor and his periodical, as I should have wished them, temperate and sunny—somewhat clap-trap and sentimental, perhaps, and afraid of speaking out, as all parties are, but still willing to allow my fancy free range in light fictions, descriptions of foreign countries, scraps of showy rose-pink morality and such like; which, though they had no more power against the raging mass of crime, misery, and discontent, around, than a peacock's feather against a three-decker, still were all genial, graceful, kindly, humanizing, and soothed my discontented and impatient heart in the work of composition.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TOWNSMAN'S SERMON TO THE GOWNSMAN.

ONE morning in February, a few days after this explosion, I was on the point of starting to go to the dean's house about that weary list of subscribers, which seemed destined never to be filled up, when my cousin George burst in upon me. He was in the highest good spirits at having just taken a double first-class at Cambridge; and after my congratulations, sincere and hearty enough, were over, he offered to accompany me to that reverend gentleman's house.

He said in an off-hand way, that he had no particular business there, but he thought it just as well to call on the dean and mention his success, in case the old fellow should not have heard of it.

"For you see," he said, "I am a sort of *protégé*, both on my own account and on Lord Lynedale's—Ellerton, he is now—you know he is just married to the dean's niece, Miss Staunton—and Ellerton's a capital fellow—promised me a living as soon as I'm in priest's orders. So my cue is now," he went on as we walked down the Strand together, "to get ordained as fast as ever I can."

"But," I asked, "have you read much for ordination, or seen much of what a clergyman's work should be?"

"Oh! as for that—you know it isn't one out of ten who's ever entered a school, or a cottage even, except to light a cigar, before he goes into the church: and as for the examination, that's all humbug; any man may cram it all up in a month—and, thanks to King's College, I knew all I wanted to know before I went to Cambridge.

And I shall be three-and-twenty by Trinity Sunday, and then in I go, neck or nothing. Only the confounded bore is, that this Bishop of London won't give one a title —won't let any man into his diocese, who has not been ordained two years; and so I shall be shoved down into some poking little country-curacy, without a chance of making play before the world, or getting myself known at all. Horrid bore! isn't it?"

"I think," I said, "considering what London is just now, the bishop's regulation seems to be one of the best specimens of episcopal wisdom that I've heard of for some time."

"Great bore for me, though, all the same: for I must make a name, I can tell you, if I intend to get on. A person must work like a horse, now-a-days, to succeed at all; and Lynedale's a desperately particular fellow, with all sorts of *outré* notions about people's duties and vocations and heaven knows what."

"Well," I said, "my dear cousin, and have you no high notions of a clergyman's vocation? because we—I mean the working men—have. It's just their high idea of what a clergyman should be, which makes them so furious at clergymen for being what they are."

"It's a queer way of showing their respect to the priesthood," he answered, "to do all they can to exterminate it."

"I dare say they are liable, like other men, to confound the thing with its abuses; but if they hadn't some dim notion that the thing might be made a good thing in itself, you may depend upon it they would not rave against those abuses so fiercely." (The reader may see that I had not forgotten my conversation with Miss Staunton.) "And," thought I to myself, "is it not you, and such as you, who do so incorporate the abuses into the system, that one really cannot tell which is which, and longs to shove the whole thing aside as rotten to the core, and make a trial of something new?"

"Well, but," I said, again returning to the charge, for the subject was altogether curious and interesting to me, "do you really believe the doctrines of the Prayer-book, George?"

"Believe them!" he answered, in a tone of astonishment, "why not? I was brought up a Churchman, whatever my parents were; I was always intended for the ministry. I'd sign the Thirty-nine Articles now, against any man in the three kingdoms; and as for all the proofs out of Scripture and Church History, I've known them ever since I was sixteen—I'll get them all up again in a week as fresh as ever."

"But," I rejoined, astonished in my turn at my cousin's notion of what belief was, "have you any personal faith?—you know what I mean—I hate using cant words—but inward experience of the truth of all these great ideas, which, true or false, you will have to preach and teach? Would you live by them, die for them, as a patriot would for his country, now?"

"My dear fellow, I don't know anything about all those Methodistical, mystical, Calvinistical, inward experiences, and all that. I'm a Churchman, remember, and a High Churchman, too; and the doctrine of the Church is, that children are regenerated in holy baptism; and there's not the least doubt, from the authority both of Scripture and the fathers, that that's the——"

"For Heaven's sake," I said, "no polemical discussions! Whether you're right or wrong, that's not what I'm talking about. What I want to know is this:—you are going to teach people about God and Jesus Christ. Do you delight in God? Do you love Jesus Christ? Never mind what I do, or think, or believe. What do you do, George?"

"Well, my dear fellow, if you take things in that way, you know, of course"—and he dropped his voice into that peculiar tone, by which all sects seem to think they show their reverence; while to me, as to most other working men, it never seemed anything but a symbol of the separation and discrepancy between their daily thoughts and their religious ones—"of course, we don't any of us think of these things half enough, and I'm sure I wish I could be more earnest than I am; but I can only hope it will come in time. The Church holds that there's a grace given in ordination; and really—really,

I do hope and wish to do my duty—indeed, one can't help doing it; one is so pushed on by the immense competition for preferment; an idle parson hasn't a chance now-a-days."

"But," I asked again, half-laughing, half-disgusted, "do you know what your duty is?"

"Bless you, my good fellow, a man can't go wrong there. Carry out the Church system; that's the thing—all laid down by rule and method. A man has but to work out that—and it's the only one for the lower classes I'm convinced."

"Strange," I said, "that they have from the first been so little of that opinion, that every attempt to enforce it, for the last three hundred years, has ended either in persecution or revolution."

"Ah! that was all those vile puritans' fault. They wouldn't give the Church a chance of showing her powers."

"What! not when she had it all her own way, during the whole eighteenth century?"

"Ah! but things are very different now. The clergy are awakened now to the real beauty of the Catholic machinery; and you have no notion how much is doing in church-building and schools, and societies of every sort and kind. It is quite incredible what is being done now for the lower orders by the Church."

"I believe," I said, "that the clergy are exceedingly improved; and I believe, too, that the men to whom they owe all their improvement are the Wesleys and Whitfields—in short, the very men whom they drove one by one out of the Church, from persecution or disgust. And I do think it strange, that if so much is doing for the lower classes, the working men, who form the mass of the lower classes, are just those who scarcely feel the effects of it; while the churches seem to be filled with children, and rich and respectable, to the almost entire exclusion of the adult lower classes. A strange religion this!" I went on, "and, to judge by its effects, a very different one from that preached in Judea 1800 years ago, if we are to believe the Gospel story."

"What on earth do you mean? Is not the Church of England the very purest form of Apostolic Christianity?"

"It may be—and so may the other sects. But, somehow, in Judea, it was the publicans and harlots who pressed into the kingdom of heaven; and it was the common people who heard Christ gladly. Christianity, then, was a movement in the hearts of the lower order. But now, my dear fellow, you rich, who used to be told, in St. James's time, to weep and howl, have turned the tables upon us poor. It is *you* who are talking, all day long, of converting *us*. Look at any place of worship you like, orthodox and heretical.—Who fill the pews?—the outcast and the reprobate? No! the Pharisees and the covetous, who used to deride Christ, fill His churches, and say still, 'This people, these masses, who know not the Gospel are accursed.' And the universal feeling, as far as I can judge, seems to be, not 'how hardly shall they who have,' but how hardly shall they who have *not*, 'riches, enter into the kingdom of heaven!'"

"Upon my word," said he, laughing, "I did not give you credit for so much eloquence: you seem to have studied the Bible to some purpose, too. I didn't think that so much Radicalism could be squeezed out of a few texts of Scripture. It's quite a new light to me. I'll just mark that card, and play it when I get a convenient opportunity. It may be a winning one in these democratic times."

And he did play it, as I heard hereafter; but at present he seemed to think that the less that was said further on clerical subjects the better, and commenced quizzing the people whom we passed, humorously and neatly enough; while I walked on in silence, and thought of Mr. Bye-Ends, in the "Pilgrim's Progress." And yet I believe the man was really in earnest. He was really desirous to do what was right, as far as he knew it; and all the more desirous, because he saw, in the present state of society, what was right would pay him. God shall judge him, not I. Who can unravel the confusion of mingled selfishness and devotion that exists even in his own heart, much less in that of another?

The dean was not at home that day, having left town on business. George nodded familiarly to the footman who opened the door.

"You'll mind and send me word the moment your master comes home—mind now!"

The fellow promised obedience, and we walked away.

"You seem to be very intimate here," said I, "with all parties?"

"Oh! footmen are useful animals—a half-sovereign now and then is not altogether thrown away upon them. But as for the higher powers, it is very easy to make oneself at home in the dean's study, but not so much so as to get a footing in the drawing-room above. I suspect he keeps a precious sharp eye upon the fair Miss Lillian."

"But," I asked, as a jealous pang shot through my heart, "how did you contrive to get this same footing at all? When I met you at Cambridge, you seemed already well acquainted with these people."

"How?—how does a hound get a footing on a cold scent? By working and casting about and about, and drawing on it inch by inch, as I drew on them for years, my boy; and cold enough the scent was. You recollect that day at the Dulwich Gallery? I tried to see the arms on the carriage, but there were none; so that cock wouldn't fight."

"The arms! I should never have thought of such a plan."

"Dare say you wouldn't. Then I harked back to the doorkeeper, while you were St. Sebastianizing. He didn't know their names, or didn't choose to show me their ticket, on which it ought to have been; so I went to one of the fellows whom I knew, and got him to find out. There comes out the value of money—for money makes acquaintances. Well, I found who they were.—Then I saw no chance of getting at them. But for the rest of that year at Cambridge, I beat every bush in the university, to find some one who knew them; and as fortune favours the brave, at last I hit off this Lord Lynedale; and he, of course, was the ace of trumps—a fine catch in himself, and a double catch because he was

going to marry the cousin. So I made a dead set at him; and tight work I had to nab him, I can tell you, for he was three or four years older than I, and had travelled a good deal, and seen life. But every man has his weak side; and I found his was a sort of a High-Church Radicalism, and that suited me well enough, for I was always a deuce of a radical myself; so I stuck to him like a leech, and stood all his temper, and his pride, and those unpractical, windy visions of his, that made a common-sense fellow like me sick to listen to; but I stood it, and here I am."

"And what on earth induced you to stoop to all this——" meanness I was on the point of saying. "Surely you are in no want of money—your father could buy you a good living to-morrow."

"And he will, but not the one I want; and he could not buy me reputation, power, rank, do you see, Alton, my genius? And what's more, he couldn't buy me a certain little tit-bit, a jewel, worth a Jew's eye and a half, Alton, that I set my heart on from the first moment I set my eye on it."

My heart beat fast and fierce, but he ran on—

"Do you think I'd have eaten all this dirt if it hadn't lain in my way to her? Eat dirt! I'd drink blood, Alton—though I don't often deal in strong words—if it lay in that road. I never set my heart on a thing yet, that I didn't get it at last by fair means or foul—and I'll get her! I don't care for her money, though that's a pretty plum. Upon my life, I don't. I worship her, limbs and eyes. I worship the very ground she treads on. She's a duck and a darling," said he, smacking his lips like an Ogre over his prey, "and I'll have her before I've done, so help me——"

"Whom do you mean?" I stammered out.

"Lillian, you blind beetle."

I dropped his arm—"Never, as I live!"

He started back, and burst into a horse-laugh.

"Hullo! my eye and Betty Martin! You don't mean to say that I have the honour of finding a rival in my talented cousin?"

I made no answer.

"Come, come, my dear fellow, this is too ridiculous. You and I are very good friends, and we may help each other, if we choose, like kith and kin in this here wale. So if you're fool enough to quarrel with me, I warn you I'm not fool enough to return the compliment. Only" (lowering his voice), "just bear one little thing in mind—that I am, unfortunately, of a somewhat determined humour; and if folks will get in my way, why it's not my fault if I drive over them. You understand? Well, if you intend to be sulky, I don't. So good morning, till you feel yourself better."

And he turned gaily down a side-street and disappeared, looking taller, handsomer, manfuller than ever.

I returned home miserable; I now saw in my cousin not merely a rival, but a tyrant; and I began to hate him with that bitterness which fear alone can inspire. The eleven pounds still remained unpaid. Between three and four pounds was the utmost which I had been able to hoard up that autumn, by dint of scribbling and stinting; there was no chance of profit from my book for months to come—if indeed it ever got published, which I hardly dare believe it would; and I knew him too well to doubt that neither pity nor delicacy would restrain him from using his power over me, if I dared even to seem an obstacle in his way.

I tried to write, but could not. I found it impossible to direct my thoughts, even to sit still; a vague spectre of terror and degradation crushed me. Day after day I sat over the fire, and jumped up and went into the shop, to find something which I did not want, and peep listlessly into a dozen books, one after the other, and then wander back again to the fireside, to sit mooning and moping, starting at that horrible incubus of debt—a devil which may give mad strength to the strong, but only paralyses the weak. And I was weak, as every poet is, more or less. There was in me, as I have somewhere read that there is in all poets, that feminine vein—a receptive as well as a creative faculty—which kept up in me a continual thirst after beauty, rest, enjoyment. And here was circum-

stance after circumstance goading me onward, as the gadfly did Io, to continual wanderings, never ceasing exertions; every hour calling on me to do, while I was only longing to be—to sit and observe, and fancy, and build freely at my own will. And then—as if this necessity of perpetual petty exertion was not in itself sufficient torment—to have that accursed debt—that knowledge that I was in a rival's power, rising up like a black wall before me, to cripple, and render hopeless, for aught I knew, the very exertions to which it compelled me! I hated the bustle—the crowds; the ceaseless roar of the street outside maddened me. I longed in vain for peace—for one day's freedom—to be one hour a shepherd-boy, and lie looking up at the blue sky, without a thought beyond the rushes that I was plaiting! "Oh! that I had wings as a dove!—then would I flee away, and be at rest!"——

And then, more than once or twice either, the thoughts of suicide crossed me; and I turned it over, and looked at it, and dallied with it, as a last chance in reserve. And then the thought of Lillian came, and drove away the fiend. And then the thought of my cousin came, and paralysed me again; for it told me that one hope was impossible. And then some fresh instance of misery or oppression forced itself upon me, and made me feel the awful sacredness of my calling, as a champion of the poor, and the base cowardice of deserting them for any selfish love of rest. And then I recollected how I had betrayed my suffering brothers.—How, for the sake of vanity and patronage, I had consented to hide the truth about their rights—their wrongs. And so on through weary weeks of moping melancholy—"a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways?"

At last, Mackaye, who, as I found afterwards, had been watching all along my altered mood, contrived to worm my secret out of me. I had dreaded, that whole autumn, having to tell him the truth, because I knew that his first impulse would be to pay the money instantly out of his own pocket; and my pride, as well as my sense of justice, revolted at that, and sealed my

lips. But now this fresh discovery—the knowledge that it was not only in my cousin's power to crush me, but also his interest to do so—had utterly unmanned me; and after a little innocent and fruitless prevarication, out came the truth with tears of bitter shame.

The old man pursed up his lips, and, without answering me, opened his table drawer, and commenced fumbling among accounts and papers.

"No! no! no! best, noblest of friends! I will not burden you with the fruits of my own vanity and extravagance. I will starve, go to gaol sooner than take your money. If you offer it me I will leave the house, bag and baggage, this moment." And I rose to put my threat into execution.

"I havena at present ony sic intention," answered he, deliberately, "seeing that there's na necessity for paying debits twice owre, when ye ha' the stampt receipt for them." And he put into my hands, to my astonishment and rapture, a receipt in full for the money, signed by my cousin.

Not daring to believe my own eyes, I turned it over and over, looked at it, looked at him—there was nothing but clear, smiling assurance in his beloved old face, as he twinkled, and winked, and chuckled, and pulled off his spectacles, and wiped them, and put them on upside-down; and then relieved himself by rushing at his pipe, and cramming it fiercely with tobacco till he burst the bowl.

Yes; it was no dream!—the money was paid, and I was free! The sudden relief was as intolerable as the long burden had been; and, like a prisoner suddenly loosed from off the rack, my whole spirit seemed suddenly to collapse, and I sank with my head upon the table to faint even for gratitude.

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But who was my benefactor? Mackaye vouchsafed no answer, but that I "suld ken better than he." But when he found that I was really utterly at a loss to whom to attribute the mercy, he assured me, by way of

comfort, that he was just as ignorant as myself; and at last, piecemeal, in his circumlocutory and cautious Scotch method, informed me, that some six weeks back he had received an anonymous letter, "a'thegither o' a Belgravian cast o' phizog," containing a bank note for twenty pounds, and setting forth the writer's suspicions that I owed my cousin money, and their desire that Mr. Mackaye, "o' whose uprightness and generosity they were pleased to confess themselves no that ignorant," should write to George, ascertain the sum, and pay it without my knowledge, handing over the balance, if any, to me, when he thought fit—"Sae there's the remnant—aucht pounds, sax shillings, an' saxpence; tippence being deduckit for expense o' twa letters anent the same transaction."

"But what sort of handwriting was it?" asked I, almost disregarding the welcome coin.

"Ou, then—aiblins a man's, aiblins a maid's. He was no chirographosophic himsel—an' he had na curiosity anent ony sic passage o' aristocratic romance."

"But what was the postmark of the letter?"

"Why for suld I speired? Gin the writers had been minded to be beknown, they'd ha' sign't their names upon the document. An' gin they didna sae intend, wad it be coorteous o' me to gang speiring an' peering ower covers an' seals?"

"But where is the cover?"

"Ou, then," he went on, with the same provoking coolness, "white paper's o' geyan use, in various operations o' the domestic economy. Sae I just tare it up—aiblins for pipe-lights—I canna mind at this time."

"And why," asked I, more vexed and disappointed than I liked to confess—"why did you not tell me before?"

"How wad I ken that you had need o't? An' verily, I thocht it no that bad a lesson for ye, to let ye experiment a towmond mair on the precious balms that break the head—whereby I opine the Psalmist was minded to denote the delights o' spending borrowed siller."

There was nothing more to be extracted from him;

so I was fain to set to work again (a pleasant compulsion truly) with a free heart, eight pounds in my pocket, and a brainful of conjectures. Was it the dean? Lord Lynedale? or was it—could it be—Lillian herself? That thought was so delicious that I made up my mind, as I had free choice among half a dozen equally improbable fancies, to determine that the most pleasant should be the true one; and hoarded the money, which I shrunk from spending as much as I should from selling her miniature or a lock of her beloved golden hair. They were a gift from her—a pledge—the first fruits of—I dare not confess to myself what.

Whereat the reader will smile, and say, not without reason, that I was fast fitting myself for Bedlam; if, indeed, I had not proved my fitness for it already, by paying the tailors' debts, instead of my own, with the ten pounds which Farmer Porter had given me. I am not sure that he would not be correct; but so I did, and so I suffered.

CHAPTER XXV.

A TRUE NOBLEMAN.

AT last my list of subscribers was completed, and my poems actually in the press. Oh! the childish joy with which I fondled my first set of proofs! And how much finer the words looked in print than they ever did in manuscript!—One took in the idea of a whole page so charmingly at a glance, instead of having to feel one's way through line after line, and sentence after sentence.—There was only one drawback to my happiness —Mackaye did not seem to sympathize with it. He had never grumbled at what I considered, and still do consider, my cardinal offence, the omission of the strong political passages; he seemed, on the contrary, in his inexplicable waywardness, to be rather pleased at it than otherwise. It was my publishing at all at which he growled.

"Ech," he said, "owre young to marry, is owre young to write; but it's the way o' these puir distractit times. Nae chick can find a grain o' corn, but oot he rins cackling wi' the shell on his head, to tell it to a' the warld, as if there was never barley grown on the face o' the earth before. I wonder whether Isaiah began to write before his beard was grown, or Dawvid either? He had mony a long year o' shepherding an' mosstrooping, an' rugging an' riving i' the wilderness, I'll warrant, afore he got thae gran' lyrics o' his oot o' him. Ye might tak example too, gin ye were minded, by Moses, the man o' God, that was joost forty years at the learning o' the Egyptians, afore he thocht gude

to come forward into public life, an' then fun' to his gran' surprise, I warrant, that he'd begun forty years too sune —an' then had forty years mair, after that, o' marching an' law-giving, an' bearing the burdens o' the people, before he turned poet."

"Poet, sir! I never saw Moses in that light before."

"Then ye'll just read the 90th Psalm—'the prayer o' Moses, the man o' God'—the grandest piece o' lyric, to my taste, that I ever heard o' on the face o' God's earth, an' see what a man can write that'll have the patience to wait a century or twa before he rins to the publisher's. I gie ye up fra' this moment; the letting out o' ink is like the letting out o' waters, or the eating o' opium, or the getting up at public meetings.—When a man begins he canna stop. There's nae mair enslaving lust o' the flesh under the heaven than that same *furor scribendi*, as the Latins hae it."

But at last my poems were printed, and bound, and actually published; and I sat staring at a book of my own making, and wondering how it ever got into being! And what was more, the book "took," and sold, and was reviewed in People's journals, and in newspapers; and Mackaye himself relaxed into a grin, when his oracle, the *Spectator*, the only honest paper, according to him, on the face of the earth, condescended, after asserting its impartiality by two or three searching sarcasms, to dismiss me, grimly-benignant, with a paternal pat on the shoulder. Yes—I was a real live author at last, and signed myself, by special request, in the * * * * Magazine, as "the author of Songs of the Highways." At last it struck me, and Mackaye too, who, however he hated flunkeydom, never overlooked an act of discourtesy, that it would be right for me to call upon the dean, and thank him formally for all the real kindness he had shown me. So I went to the handsome house off Harley-street, and was shown into his study, and saw my own book lying on the table, and was welcomed by the good old man, and congratulated on my success, and asked if I did not see my own wisdom in "yielding to more experienced

opinions than my own, and submitting to a censorship which, however severe it might have appeared at first, was, as the event proved, benignant both in its intentions and effects?"

And then I was asked, even I, to breakfast there the next morning. And I went, and found no one there but some scientific gentlemen, to whom I was introduced as "the young man whose poems we were talking of last night." And Lillian sat at the head of the table, and poured out the coffee and tea. And between ecstasy at seeing her, and the intense relief of not finding my dreaded and now hated cousin there, I sat in a delirium of silent joy, stealing glances at her beauty, and listening with all my ears to the conversation, which turned upon the new-married couple.

I heard endless praises, to which I could not but assent in silence, of Lord Ellerton's perfections. His very personal appearance had been enough to captivate my fancy; and then they went on to talk of his magnificent philanthropic schemes, and his deep sense of the high duties of a landlord; and how, finding himself, at his father's death, the possessor of two vast but neglected estates, he had sold one in order to be able to do justice to the other, instead of laying house to house, and field to field, like most of his compeers, "till he stood alone in the land, and there was no place left;" and how he had lowered his rents, even though it had forced him to put down the ancestral pack of hounds, and live in a corner of the old castle; and how he was draining, claying, breaking up old moorlands, and building churches, and endowing schools, and improving cottages; and how he was expelling the old ignorant bankrupt race of farmers, and advertising everywhere for men of capital, and science, and character, who would have courage to cultivate flax and silk, and try every species of experiment; and how he had one scientific farmer after another, staying in his house as a friend; and how he had numbers of his books rebound in plain covers, that he might lend them to every one on his estate who wished to read them; and how he had thrown open his picture gallery, not only to

the inhabitants of the neighbouring town, but what (strange to say) seemed to strike the party as still more remarkable, to the labourers of his own village; and how he was at that moment busy transforming an old unoccupied manor-house into a great associate farm, in which all the labourers were to live under one roof, with a common kitchen and dining-hall, clerks and superintendents, whom they were to choose, subject only to his approval, and all of them, from the least to the greatest, have their own interest in the farm, and be paid by percentage on the profits; and how he had one of the first political economists of the day staying with him, in order to work out for him tables of proportionate remuneration, applicable to such an agricultural establishment; and how, too, he was giving the spade-labour system a fair trial, by laying out small cottage-farms, on rocky knolls and sides of glens, too steep to be cultivated by the plough; and was locating on them the most intelligent artisans whom he could draft from the manufacturing town hard by——

And at that notion, my brain grew giddy with the hope of seeing myself one day in one of those same cottages, tilling the earth, under God's sky, and perhaps—— And then a whole cloud-world of love, freedom, fame, simple, graceful country luxury steamed up across my brain, to end—not, like the man's in the "Arabian Nights," in my kicking over the tray of China, which formed the base-point of my inverted pyramid of hope—but in my finding the contents of my plate deposited in my lap, while I was gazing fixedly at Lillian.

I must say for myself, though, that such accidents happened seldom; whether it was bashfulness, or the tact which generally, I believe, accompanies a weak and nervous body, and an active mind; or whether it was that I possessed enough relationship to the monkey-tribe to make me a first-rate mimic, I used to get tolerably well through on these occasions, by acting on the golden rule of never doing anything which I had not seen some one else do first—a rule which never brought me into any greater scrape than swallowing something intolerably

hot, sour, and nasty (whereof I never discovered the name), because I had seen the dean do so a moment before.

But one thing struck me through the whole of this conversation—the way in which the new-married Lady Ellerton was spoken of, as aiding, encouraging, originating—a helpmeet, if not an oracular guide, for her husband—in all these noble plans. She had already acquainted herself with every woman on the estate; she was the dispenser, not merely of alms—for those seemed a disagreeable necessity, from which Lord Ellerton was anxious to escape as soon as possible—but of advice, comfort, and encouragement. She not only visited the sick, and taught in the schools—avocations which, thank God, I have reason to believe are matters of course, not only in the families of clergymen, but those of most squires and noblemen, when they reside on their estates—but seemed, from the hints which I gathered, to be utterly devoted, body and soul, to the welfare of the dwellers on her husband's land.

"I had no notion," I dared at last to remark, humbly enough, "that Miss—Lady Ellerton cared so much for the people."

"Really! One feels inclined sometimes to wish that she cared for anything beside them," said Lillian, half to her father and half to me.

This gave a fresh shake to my estimate of that remarkable woman's character. But still, who could be prouder, more imperious, more abrupt in manner, harsh even to the very verge of good-breeding? (for I had learnt what good-breeding was, from the debating society as well as from the drawing-room;) and, above all, had she not tried to keep me from Lillian? But these cloudy thoughts melted rapidly away in that sunny atmosphere of success and happiness, and I went home as merry as a bird, and wrote all the morning more gracefully and sportively, as I fancied, than I had ever yet done.

But my bliss did not end here. In a week or so, behold one morning a note—written, indeed, by the dean—but directed in Lillian's own hand, inviting me to come there

to tea, that I might see a few of the literary characters of the day.

I covered the envelope with kisses, and thrust it next my fluttering heart. I then proudly showed the note to Mackaye. He looked pleased, yet pensive, and then broke out with a fresh adaptation of his favourite song,

> ———and shovel hats and a' that—
> A man's a man for a' that.

"The auld gentleman is a man and a gentleman; an' has made a verra courteous, an' weel considerit move, gin ye ha' the sense to profit by it, an' no turn it to yer ain destruction."

"Destruction?"

"Ay—that's the word, an' nothing less, laddie!"

And he went into the outer shop, and returned with a volume of Bulwer's "Ernest Maltravers."

"What! are you a novel reader, Mr. Mackaye?"

"How do ye ken what I may ha' thocht gude to read in my time? Ye'll be pleased the noo to sit down an' begin at that page—an read, mark, learn, an' inwardly digest, the history of Castruccio Cesarini—an' the gude God gie ye grace to lay the same to heart."

I read that fearful story; and my heart sunk, and my eyes were full of tears, long ere I had finished it. Suddenly I looked up at Mackaye, half angry at the pointed allusion to my own case.

The old man was watching me intently, with folded hands, and a smile of solemn interest and affection worthy of Socrates himself. He turned his head as I looked up, but his lips kept moving. I fancied, I know not why, that he was praying for me.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE TRIUMPHANT AUTHOR.

So to the party I went, and had the delight of seeing and hearing the men with whose names I had been long acquainted, as the leaders of scientific discovery in this wondrous age; and more than one poet, too, over whose works I had gloated, whom I had worshipped in secret. Intense was the pleasure of now realizing to myself, as living men, wearing the same flesh and blood as myself, the names which had been to me mythic ideas. Lillian was there among them, more exquisite than ever; but even she at first attracted my eyes and thoughts less than did the truly great men around her. I hung on every word they spoke, I watched every gesture, as if they must have some deep significance; the very way in which they drank their coffee was a matter of interest to me. I was almost disappointed to see them eat and chat like common men. I expected that pearls and diamonds would drop from their lips, as they did from those of the girl, in the fairy-tale, every time they opened their mouths; and certainly, the conversation that evening was a new world to me—though I could only, of course, be a listener. Indeed, I wished to be nothing more. I felt that I was taking my place there among the holy guild of authors—that I too, however humbly, had a thing to say, and had said it; and I was content to sit on the lowest step of the literary temple, without envy for those elder and more practised priests of wisdom, who had earned by long labour the freedom of the inner shrine. I should have been quite happy enough standing there, looking

and listening—but I was at last forced to come forward. Lillian was busy chatting with grave, grey-headed men, who seemed as ready to flirt, and pet and admire the lovely little fairy, as if they had been as young and gay as herself. It was enough for me to see her appreciated and admired. I loved them for smiling on her, for handing her from her seat to the piano with reverent courtesy: gladly would I have taken their place: I was content, however, to be only a spectator; for it was not my rank, but my youth, I was glad to fancy, which denied me that blissful honour. But as she sang, I could not help stealing up to the piano; and, feasting my greedy eyes with every motion of those delicious lips, listen and listen, entranced, and living only in that melody.

Suddenly, after singing two or three songs, she began fingering the keys, and struck into an old air, wild and plaintive, rising and falling like the swell of an Æolian harp upon a distant breeze.

"Ah! now," she said, "if I could get words for that! What an exquisite lament somebody might write to it, if they could only thoroughly take in the feeling and meaning of it."

"Perhaps," I said, humbly, "that is the only way to write songs—to let some air get possession of ones whole soul, and gradually inspire the words for itself; as the old Hebrew prophets had music played before them, to wake up the prophetic spirit within them."

She looked up, just as if she had been unconscious of my presence till that moment.

"Ah! Mr. Locke!—well, if you understand my meaning so thoroughly, perhaps you will try and write some words for me."

"I am afraid that I do not enter sufficiently into the meaning of the air."

"Oh! then, listen while I play it over again. I am sure *you* ought to appreciate anything so sad and tender."

And she did play it, to my delight, over again, even more gracefully and carefully than before—making the inarticulate sounds speak a mysterious train of thoughts

and emotions. It is strange how little real intellect, in women especially, is required for an exquisite appreciation of the beauties of music—perhaps, because it appeals to the heart and not the head.'

She rose and left the piano, saying archly, "Now, don't forget your promise;" and I, poor fool, my sunlight suddenly withdrawn, began torturing my brains on the instant to think of a subject.

As it happened, my attention was caught by hearing two gentlemen close to me discuss a beautiful sketch by Copley Fielding, if I recollect rightly, which hung on the wall—a wild waste of tidal sands, with here and there a line of stake-nets fluttering in the wind—a grey shroud of rain sweeping up from the westward, through which low red cliffs glowed dimly in the rays of the setting sun—a train of horses and cattle splashing slowly through shallow desolate pools and creeks, their wet, red, and black hides glittering in one long line of level light.

They seemed thoroughly conversant with art; and as I listened to their criticisms, I learnt more in five minutes about the characteristics of a really true and good picture, and about the perfection to which our unrivalled English landscape-painters have attained, than I ever did from all the books and criticisms which I had read. One of them had seen the spot represented, at the mouth of the Dee, and began telling wild stories of salmon-fishing, and wild-fowl shooting—and then a tale of a girl, who, in bringing her father's cattle home across the sands, had been caught by a sudden flow of the tide, and found next day a corpse hanging among the stake-nets far below. The tragedy, the art of the picture, the simple, dreary grandeur of the scenery, took possession of me; and I stood gazing a long time, and fancying myself pacing the sands, and wondering whether there were shells upon it—I had often longed for once only in my life to pick up shells—when Lady Ellerton, whom I had not before noticed, woke me from my reverie.

I took the liberty of asking after Lord Ellerton.

"He is not in town—he has stayed behind for one day to attend a great meeting of his tenantry—you will see

the account in the papers to-morrow morning—he comes to-morrow." And as she spoke her whole face and figure seemed to glow and heave, in spite of herself, with pride and affection.

"And now, come with me, Mr. Locke—the * * * ambassador wishes to speak to you."

"The * * * ambassador!" I said, startled; for let us be as democratic as we will, there is something in the name of great officers which awes, perhaps rightly, for the moment, and it requires a strong act of self-possession to recollect that "a man's a man for a' that." Besides, I knew enough of the great man in question to stand in awe of him for his own sake, having lately read a panegyric of him, which perfectly astounded me, by its description of his piety and virtue, his family affection, and patriarchal simplicity, the liberality and philanthropy of all his measures, and the enormous intellectual powers, and stores of learning, which enabled him, with the affairs of Europe on his shoulders, to write deeply and originally on the most abstruse questions of theology, history, and science.

Lady Ellerton seemed to guess my thoughts. "You need not be afraid of meeting an aristocrat, in the vulgar sense of the word. You will see one who, once perhaps as unknown as yourself, has risen by virtue and wisdom to guide the destinies of nations—and shall I tell you how? Not by fawning and yielding to the fancies of the great; not by compromising his own convictions to suit their prejudices——"

I felt the rebuke, but she went on—

"He owes his greatness to having dared, one evening, to contradict a crown-prince to his face, and fairly conquer him in argument, and thereby bind the truly royal heart to him for ever."

"There are few scions of royalty to whose favour that would be a likely path."

"True; and therefore the greater honour is due to the young student who could contradict, and the prince who could be contradicted."

By this time we had arrived in the great man's pres-

ence; he was sitting with a little circle round him, in the further drawing-room, and certainly I never saw a nobler specimen of humanity. I felt myself at once before a hero —not of war and bloodshed, but of peace and civilization; his portly and ample figure, fair hair and delicate complexion, and, above all, the benignant calm of his countenance, told of a character gentle and genial—at peace with himself and all the world; while the exquisite proportion of his chiselled and classic features, the lofty and ample brain, and the keen, thoughtful eye, bespoke, at the first glance, refinement and wisdom—

> The reason firm, the temperate will—
> Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill.

I am not ashamed to say, Chartist as I am, that I felt inclined to fall upon my knees, and own a master of God's own making.

He received my beautiful guide with a look of chivalrous affection, which I observed that she returned with interest; and then spoke in a voice peculiarly bland and melodious:

"So, my dear lady, this is the *protégé* of whom you have so often spoken?"

So she had often spoken of me! Blind fool that I was, I only took it in as food for my own self-conceit, that my enemy (for so I actually fancied her) could not help praising me.

"I have read your little book, sir," he said, in the same soft, benignant voice, "with very great pleasure. It is another proof, if I required any, of the under-current of living and healthful thought which exists even in the less-known ranks of your great nation. I shall send it to some young friends of mine in Germany, to show them that Englishmen can feel acutely and speak boldly on the social evils of their country, without indulging in that frantic and bitter revolutionary spirit, which warps so many young minds among us. You understand the German language at all?"

I had not that honour.

"Well, you must learn it. We have much to teach

you in the sphere of abstract thought, as you have much to teach us in those of the practical reason and the knowledge of mankind. I should be glad to see you some day in a German university. I am anxious to encourage a truly spiritual fraternization between the two great branches of the Teutonic stock, by welcoming all brave young English spirits to their ancient fatherland. Perhaps hereafter your kind friends here will be able to lend you to me. The means are easy, thank God! You will find in the Germans true brothers, in ways even more practical than sympathy and affection."

I could not but thank the great man, with many blushes, and went home that night utterly "*tête montée*," as I believe the French phrase is—beside myself with gratified vanity and love; to lie sleepless under a severe fit of asthma—sent perhaps as a wholesome chastisement to cool my excited spirits down to something like a rational pitch. As I lay castle-building, Lillian's wild air rang still in my ears, and combined itself somehow with that picture of the Cheshire sands, and the story of the drowned girl, till it shaped itself into a song, which, as it is yet unpublished, and as I have hitherto obtruded little or nothing of my own composition on my readers, I may be excused for inserting it here.

I.

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
Across the sands o' Dee;"
The western wind was wild and dank wi' foam,
And all alone went she.

II.

The creeping tide came up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see;
The blinding mist came down and hid the land—
And never home came she.

III.

"Oh, is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
A tress o' golden hair,
O' drowned maiden's hair,
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair,
Among the stakes on Dee."

IV.

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea:
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home,
Across the sands o' Dee.

There—let it go!—it was meant as an offering for one whom it never reached.

About mid-day I took my way towards the dean's house, to thank him for his hospitality—and, I need not say, to present my offering at my idol's shrine; and as I went, I conned over a dozen complimentary speeches about Lord Ellerton's wisdom, liberality, eloquence—but behold! the shutters of the house were closed. What could be the matter? It was full ten minutes before the door was opened; and then, at last, an old woman, her eyes red with weeping, made her appearance. My thoughts flew instantly to Lillian—something must have befallen her. I gasped out her name first, and then, recollecting myself, asked for the dean.

"They had all left town that morning."

"Miss—Miss Winnstay—is she ill?"

"No."

"Thank God!" I breathed freely again. What matter what happened to all the world beside?

"Ay, thank God, indeed; but poor Lord Ellerton was thrown from his horse last night and brought home dead. A messenger came here by six this morning, and they're all gone off to * * * *. Her ladyship's raving mad.—And no wonder." And she burst out crying afresh, and shut the door in my face.

Lord Ellerton dead! and Lillian gone too! Something

whispered that I should have cause to remember that day. My heart sunk within me. When should I see her again?

That day was the 1st of June, 1845. On the 10th of April, 1848, I saw Lillian Winnstay again. Dare I write my history between those two points of time? Yes, even that must be done, for the sake of the rich who read, and the poor who suffer.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PLUSH BREECHES TRAGEDY.

My triumph had received a cruel check enough when just at its height, and more were appointed to follow. Behold! some two days after, another—all the more bitter, because my conscience whispered that it was not altogether undeserved. The people's press had been hitherto praising and petting me lovingly enough. I had been classed (and heaven knows that the comparison was dearer to me than all the applause of the wealthy) with the Corn-Law Rhymer, and the author of the "Purgatory of Suicides." My class had claimed my talents as their own—another "voice fresh from the heart of nature," another "untutored songster of the wilderness," another "prophet arisen among the suffering millions,"—when, one day, behold in Mr. O'Flynn's paper a long and fierce attack on me, my poems, my early history! How he could have got at some of the facts there mentioned, how he could have dared to inform his readers that I had broken my mother's heart by my misconduct, I cannot conceive; unless my worthy brother-in-law, the Baptist preacher, had been kind enough to furnish him with the materials. But however that may be, he showed me no mercy. I was suddenly discovered to be a time-server, a spy, a concealed aristocrat. Such paltry talent as I had, I had prostituted for the sake of fame. I had deserted The People's Cause for filthy lucre—an allurement which Mr. O'Flynn had always treated with withering scorn—*in print*. Nay, more, I would write, and notoriously did write, in any paper, Whig,

Tory, or Radical, where I could earn a shilling by an enormous gooseberry, or a scrap of private slander. And the working men were solemnly warned to beware of me and my writings, till the editor had further investigated certain ugly facts in my history, which he would in due time report to his patriotic and enlightened readers.

All this stung me in the most sensitive nerve of my whole heart, for I knew that I could not altogether exculpate myself; and to that miserable certainty was added the dread of some fresh exposure. Had he actually heard of the omissions in my poems?—and if he once touched on that subject, what could I answer? Oh! how bitterly now I felt the force of the critic's careless lash! The awful responsibility of those written words, which we bandy about so thoughtlessly! How I recollected now, with shame and remorse, all the hasty and cruel utterances to which I, too, had given vent against those who had dared to differ from me; the harsh, one-sided judgments, the reckless imputations of motive, the bitter sneers, "rejoicing in evil rather than in the truth." How I, too, had longed to prove my victims in the wrong, and turned away, not only lazily, but angrily, from many an exculpatory fact! And here was my Nemesis come at last. As I had done unto others, so it was done unto me!

It was right that it should be so. However indignant, mad, almost murderous, I felt at the time, I thank God for it now. It is good to be punished in kind. It is good to be made to feel what we have made others feel. It is good—anything is good, however bitter, which shows us that there is such a law as retribution; that we are not the sport of blind chance or a triumphant fiend, but that there is a God who judges the earth—righteous to repay every man according to his works.

But at the moment I had no such ray of comfort—and, full of rage and shame, I dashed the paper down before Mackaye. "How shall I answer him? What shall I say?"

The old man read it all through with a grim saturnine smile.

"Hoolie, hoolie, speech is o' silver—silence is o' gold says Thomas Carlyle, anent this an' ither matters. Wha'd be fashed wi' sic blethers? Ye'll just abide patient, and haud still in the Lord, until this tyranny be owerpast. Commit your cause to him, said the auld Psalmist, an' he'll mak your righteousness as clear as the light, an' your just dealing as the noonday."

"But I must explain; I owe it as a duty to myself; I must refute these charges; I must justify myself to our friends."

"Can ye do that same, laddie?" asked he, with one of his quaint, searching looks. Somehow I blushed, and could not altogether meet his eye, while he went on, "——An' gin ye could, whaur would ye do't? I ken na periodical whar the editor will gie ye a clear stage an' no favour to bang him ower the lugs."

"Then I will try some other paper."

"An' what for then? They that read him, winna read the ither; an' they that read the ither, winna read him. He has his ain set o' dupes like every ither editor; an' ye mun let him gang his gate, an' feed his ain kye with his ain hay. He'll no change it for your bidding."

"What an abominable thing this whole business of the press is then, if each editor is to be allowed to humbug his readers at his pleasure, without a possibility of exposing or contradicting him!"

"An' ye've just spoken the truth, laddie. There's na mair accursed inquisition, than this of thae self-elected popes, the editors. That puir auld Roman ane, ye can bring him forat when ye list, bad as he is. 'Fœnum habet in cornu;' his name's ower his shop-door. But these anonymies—priests o' the order of Melchisedec by the deevil's side, without father or mither, beginning o' years nor end o' days—without a local habitation or a name—as kittle to haud as a brock in a cairn——"

"What do you mean, Mr. Mackaye?" asked I, for he was getting altogether unintelligibly Scotch, as was his custom when excited.

"Ou, I forgot; ye're a puir Southern body, an' no

sensible to the gran' metaphoric powers o' the true Dawric. But it's an accursit state a'thegither, the noo, this, o' the anonymous press—oreeginally devised, ye ken, by Balaam the son o' Beor, for serving God wi'out the deevil's finding it out—an' noo, after the way o' human institutions, translated ower to help folks to serve the deevil without God's finding it out. I'm no' astonished at the puir expiring religious press for siccan a fa'; but for the working men to be a' that's bad—it's grewsome to behold. I'll tell ye what, my bairn, there's na salvation for the workmen, while they defile themselves this fashion, wi' a' the very idols o' their ain tyrants—wi' salvation by act o' parliament—irresponsible rights o' property—anonymous Balaamry—fechtin' that canny auld farrant fiend, Mammon, wi' his ain weapons—and then a' fleyed, because they get well beaten for their pains. I'm sair forfaughten this mony a year wi' watching the puir gowks, trying to do God's wark wi' the deevil's tools. Tak tent o' that."

And I did "tak tent o' it." Still there would have been as little present consolation as usual in Mackaye's unwelcome truths, even if the matter had stopped there. But, alas! it did not stop there. O'Flynn seemed determined to "run a muck" at me. Every week some fresh attack appeared. The very passages about the universities and church property, which had caused our quarrel, were paraded against me, with free additions and comments; and, at last, to my horror, out came the very story which I had all along dreaded, about the expurgation of my poems, with the coarsest allusions to petticoat influence—aristocratic kisses—and the Duchess of Devonshire canvassing draymen for Fox, &c., &c. How he got a clue to the scandal I cannot conceive. Mackaye and Crossthwaite, I had thought, were the only souls to whom I had ever breathed the secret, and they denied indignantly the having ever betrayed my weakness. How it came out, I say again, I cannot conceive; except because it is a great everlasting law, and sure to fulfil itself sooner or later, as we may see by

the histories of every remarkable, and many an unremarkable, man—"There is nothing secret, but it shall be made manifest; and whatsoever ye have spoken in the closet, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops."

For some time after that last exposure, I was thoroughly crest-fallen—and not without reason. I had been giving a few lectures among the working men, on various literary and social subjects. I found my audience decrease—and those who remained seemed more inclined to hiss than to applaud me. In vain I ranted and quoted poetry, often more violently than my own opinions justified. My words touched no responsive chord in my hearers' hearts; they had lost faith in me.

At last, in the middle of a lecture on Shelley, I was indulging, and honestly too, in some very glowing and passionate praise of the true nobleness of a man, whom neither birth nor education could blind to the evils of society; who, for the sake of the suffering many, could trample under foot his hereditary pride, and become an outcast for the People's Cause.

I heard a whisper close to me, from one whose opinion I valued, and value still—a scholar and a poet, one who had tasted poverty, and slander, and a prison, for The Good Cause:

"Fine talk: but it's 'all in his day's work.' Will he dare to say that to-morrow to the ladies at the West-end?"

No—I should not. I knew it; and at that instant I felt myself a liar, and stopped short—my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. I fumbled at my papers—clutched the water-tumbler—tried to go on—stopped short again—caught up my hat, and rushed from the room, amid peals of astonished laughter.

It was some months after this that, fancying the storm blown over, I summoned up courage enough to attend a political meeting of our party; but even there my Nemesis met full face. After some sanguinary speech, I really forgot from whom, and, if I recollected, God forbid that I should tell now, I dared to controvert, mildly enough, Heaven knows, some especially

frantic assertion or other. But before I could get out three sentences, O'Flynn flew at me with a coarse invective, hounded on, by-the-by, by one who, calling himself a gentleman, might have been expected to know better. But, indeed, he and O'Flynn had the same object in view, which was simply to sell their paper; and as a means to that great end, to pander to the fiercest passions of their readers, to bully and silence all moderate and rational Chartists, and pet and tar on the physical-force men, till the poor fellows began to take them at their word. Then, when it came to deeds and not to talk, and people got frightened, and the sale of the paper decreased a little, a blessed change came over them—and they awoke one morning meeker than lambs; "ulterior measures" had vanished back into the barbarous ages, pikes, vitriol-bottles, and all; and the public were entertained with nothing but homilies on patience and resignation, the "triumphs of moral justice," the "omnipotence of public opinion," and the "gentle conquests of fraternal love"—till it was safe to talk treason and slaughter again.

But just then treason happened to be at a premium. Sedition, which had been floundering on in a confused, disconsolate, underground way ever since 1842, was supposed by the public to be dead; and for that very reason it was safe to talk it, or, at least, back up those who chose to do so. And so I got no quarter—though really, if the truth must be told, I had said nothing unreasonable.

Home I went disgusted, to toil on at my hack-writing, only praying that I might be let alone to scribble in peace, and often thinking, sadly, how little my friends in Harley-street could guess at the painful experience, the doubts, the struggles, the bitter cares, which went to the making of the poetry which they admired so much!

I was not, however, left alone to scribble in peace, either by O'Flynn or by his readers, who formed, alas! just then, only too large a portion of the thinking artizans; every day brought some fresh slight or annoyance with it, till I received one afternoon, by the Parcels

Delivery Company, a large unpaid packet, containing, to my infinite disgust, an old pair of yellow plush breeches, with a recommendation to wear them, whose meaning could not be mistaken.

Furious, I thrust the unoffending garment into the fire, and held it there with the tongs, regardless of the horrible smell which accompanied its martyrdom, till the lady-lodger on the first floor rushed down to inquire whether the house was on fire.

I answered by hurling a book at her head, and brought down a volley of abuse, under which I sat in sulky patience, till Mackaye and Crossthwaite came in, and found her railing in the doorway, and me sitting over the fire, still intent on the frizzling remains of the breeches.

"Was this insult of your invention, Mr. Crossthwaite?" asked I, in a tone of lofty indignation, holding up the last scrap of unroasted plush.

Roars of laughter from both of them made me only more frantic, and I broke out so incoherently, that it was some time before the pair could make out the cause of my fury.

"Upon my honour, Locke," quoth John, at last, holding his sides, "I never sent them; though, on the whole—you've made my stomach ache with laughing. I can't speak. But you must expect a joke or two, after your late fashionable connexions."

I stood, still and white with rage.

"Really, my good fellow, how can you wonder if our friends suspect you? Can you deny that you've been off and on lately between flunkeydom and The Cause, like a donkey between two bundles of hay? Have you not neglected our meetings? Have you not picked all the spice out of your poems? And can you expect to eat your cake and keep it too? You must be one thing or the other; and, though Sandy, here, is too kind-hearted to tell you, you have disappointed us both miserably—and there's the long and short of it."

I hid my face in my hands, and sat moodily over the fire; my conscience told me that I had nothing to answer.

"Whisht, Johnnie! Ye're ower sair on the lad. He's a'

right at heart still, an' he'll do good service. But the deevil a'ways fechts hardest wi' them he's maist 'feard of. What's this anent agricultural distress ye had to tell me the noo?"

"There is a rising down in the country, a friend of mine writes me. The people are starving, not because bread is dear, but because it's cheap; and, like sensible men, they're going to have a great meeting, to inquire the rights and wrong of all that. Now, I want to send a deputation down, to see how far they are inclined to go, and let them know we up in London are with them. And then we might get up a corresponding association, you know. It's a great opening for spreading the principles of the Charter."

"I sair misdoubt, it's just bread they'll be wanting, they labourers, mair than liberty. Their God is their belly, I'm thinking, and a verra poor empty idol he is the noo; sma' burnt offerings and fat o' rams he gets to propitiate him. But ye might send down a canny body, just to spy out the nakedness o' the land."

"I will go," I said, starting up. "They shall see that I do care for The Cause. If it's a dangerous mission, so much the better. It will prove my sincerity. Where is the place?"

"About ten miles from D * * * *."

"D * * * *!" My heart sank. If it had been any other spot in England! But it was too late to retract. Sandy saw what was the matter, and tried to turn the subject; but I was peremptory, almost rude with him. I felt I must keep up my present excitement, or lose my heart, and my caste, for ever; and as the hour for the committee was at hand, I jumped up and set off thither with them, whether they would or not. I heard Sandy whisper to Crossthwaite, and turned quite fiercely on him.

"If you want to speak about me, speak out. If you fancy that I shall let my connexion with that place" (I could not bring myself to name it) "stand in the way of my duty, you do not know me."

I announced my intention at the meeting. It was at first received coldly; but I spoke energetically—perhaps, as

some told me afterwards, actually eloquently. When I got heated, I alluded to my former stay at D * * * *, and said (while my heart sunk at the bravado which I was uttering) that I should consider it a glory to retrieve my character with them, and devote myself to the cause of the oppressed, in the very locality whence had first arisen their unjust and pardonable suspicions. In short, generous, trusting hearts as they were, and always are, I talked them round; they shook me by the hand one by one, bade me God speed, told me that I stood higher than ever in their eyes, and then set to work to vote money from their funds for my travelling expenses, which I magnanimously refused, saying that I had a pound or two left from the sale of my poems, and that I must be allowed, as an act of repentance and restitution, to devote it to The Cause.

My triumph was complete. Even O'Flynn, who, like all Irishmen, had plenty of loose good-nature at bottom, and was as sudden and furious in his loves as in his hostilities, scrambled over the benches, regardless of patriots' toes, to shake me violently by the hand, and inform me that I was "a broth of a boy," and that "any little disagreements between us had vanished like a passing cloud from the sunshine of our fraternity"—when my eye was caught by a face which there was no mistaking—my cousin's!

Yes, there he sat, watching me like a basilisk, with his dark, glittering, mesmeric eyes, out of a remote corner of the room—not in contempt or anger, but there was a quiet, assured, sardonic smile about his lips, which chilled me to the heart.

The meeting was sufficiently public to allow of his presence, but how had he found out its existence? Had he come there as a spy on me? Had he been in the room when my visit to D * * * * was determined on? I trembled at the thought; and I trembled, too, lest he should be daring enough—and I knew he could dare anything—to claim acquaintance with me there and then. It would have ruined my new-restored reputation for ever. But he sat still and steady: and I had to go

through the rest of the evening's business under the miserable, cramping knowledge that every word and gesture was being noted down by my most deadly enemy; trembling whenever I was addressed, lest some chance word of an acquaintance would implicate me still further —though, indeed, I was deep enough already. The meeting seemed interminable; and there I fidgeted, with my face scarlet—always seeing those basilisk eyes upon me—in fancy—for I dared not look again towards the corner where I knew they were.

At last it was over—the audience went out; and when I had courage to look round, my cousin had vanished among them. A load was taken off my breast, and I breathed freely again—for five minutes;—for I had not made ten steps up the street, when an arm was familiarly thrust through mine, and I found myself in the clutches of my evil genius.

"How are you, my dear fellow? Expected to meet you there. Why, what an orator you are! Really, I haven't heard more fluent or passionate English this month of Sundays. You must give me a lesson in sermon-preaching. I can tell you, we parsons want a hint or two in that line. So you're going down to D * * * *, to see after those poor starving labourers? 'Pon my honour, I've a great mind to go with you."

So, then, he knew all! However, there was nothing for it but to brazen it out; and, besides, I was in his power, and however hateful to me his seeming cordiality might be, I dared not offend him at that moment.

"It would be well if you did. If you parsons would show yourselves at such places as these a little oftener, you would do more to make the people believe your mission real, than by all the tracts and sermons in the world."

"But, my dear cousin" (and he began to snuffle and sink his voice), "there is so much sanguinary language, so much unsanctified impatience, you frighten away all the meek apostolic men among the priesthood—the very ones who feel most for the lost sheep of the flock.

"Then the parsons are either great Pharisees or great cowards, or both."

"Very likely. I was in a precious fright myself, I know, when I saw you recognized me. If I had not felt strengthened, you know, as of course one ought to be in all trials, by the sense of my holy calling, I think I should have bolted at once. However, I took the precaution of bringing my Bowie and revolver with me, in case the worst came to the worst."

"And a very needless precaution it was," said I, half laughing at the quaint incongruity of the priestly and the lay elements in his speech. "You don't seem to know much of working men's meetings, or working men's morals. Why, that place was open to all the world. The proceedings will be in the newspaper to-morrow. The whole bench of bishops might have been there, if they had chosen; and a great deal of good it would have done them!"

"I fully agree with you, my dear fellow. No one hates the bishops more than we true high-churchmen, I can tell you—that's a great point of sympathy between us and the people. But I must be off. By-the-by, would you like me to tell our friends at D * * * * that I met you? They often ask after you in their letters, I assure you."

This was a sting of complicated bitterness. I felt all that it meant at once. So he was in constant correspondence with them, while I——and that thought actually drove out of my head the more pressing danger of his utterly ruining me in their esteem, by telling them, as he had a very good right to do, that I was going to preach Chartism to discontented mobs.

"Ah! well! perhaps you wouldn't wish it mentioned? As you like, you know. Or, rather," and he laid an iron grasp on my arm, and dropped his voice—this time in earnest—"as you behave, my wise and loyal cousin! Good night."

I went home—the excitement of self-applause, which the meeting had called up, damped by a strange weight of foreboding. And yet I could not help laughing, when,

just as I was turning into bed, Crossthwaite knocked at my door, and, on being admitted, handed over to me a bundle wrapped up in paper.

"There's a pair of breeks for you—not plush ones, this time, old fellow—but you ought to look as smart as possible. There's so much in a man's looking dignified, and all that, when he's speechifying. So I've just brought you down my best black trousers to travel in. We're just of a size, you know; little and good, like a Welshman's cow. And if you tear them, why, we're not like poor, miserable, useless aristocrats; tailors and sailors can mend their own rents." And he vanished, whistling the "Marseillaise."

I went to bed and tossed about, fancying to myself my journey, my speech, the faces of the meeting, among which Lillian's would rise, in spite of all the sermons which I preached to myself on the impossibility of her being there, of my being known, of any harm happening from the movement; but I could not shake off the fear. If there were a riot, a rising!—If any harm were to happen to her! If— Till, mobbed into fatigue by a rabble of such miserable hypothetic ghosts, I fell asleep, to dream that I was going to be hanged for sedition, and that the mob were all staring and hooting at me, and Lillian clapping her hands and setting them on; and I woke in an agony, to find Sandy Mackaye standing by my bedside with a light.

"Hoolie, laddie! ye need na jump up that way. I'm no' gaun to burke ye the nicht; but I canna sleep; I'm sair misdoubtful o' the thing. It seems a' richt, an' I've been praying for us, an' that's mickle for me, to be taught our way; but I dinna see aught for ye but to gang. If your heart is richt with God in this matter, then he's o' your side, an' I fear na what men may do to ye. An' yet, ye're my Joseph, as it were, the son o' my auld age, wi' a coat o' many colours, plush breeks included; an' gin aught take ye, ye'll bring down my grey haffets wi' sorrow to the grave!"

The old man gazed at me as he spoke, with a deep, earnest affection I had never seen in him before; and the

tears glistened in his eyes by the flaring candlelight, as he went on:

"I ha' been reading the Bible the nicht. It's strange how the words o't rise up, and open themselves whiles, to puir distractit bodies; though, maybe, no' always in just the orthodox way. An' I fell on that, 'Behold I send ye forth as lambs in the midst o' wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents an' harmless as doves;' an' that gave me comfort, laddie, for ye. Mind the warning, dinna gang wud, whatever ye may see an' hear; it's an ill way o' showing pity, to gang daft anent it. Dinna talk magniloquently; that's the workman's darling sin. An' mind ye dinna go too deep wi' them. Ye canna trust them to understand ye; they're puir foolish sheep that ha' no shepherd—swine that ha' no wash, rather. So cast na your pearls before swine, laddie, lest they trample them under their feet, an' turn again an' rend ye."

He went out, and I lay awake tossing till morning, making a thousand good resolutions—like the rest of mankind.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MEN WHO ARE EATEN.

WITH many instructions from our friends, and warnings from Mackaye, I started next day on my journey. When I last caught sight of the old man, he was gazing fixedly after me, and using his pocket-handkerchief in a somewhat suspicious way. I had remarked how depressed he seemed, and my own spirits shared the depression. A presentiment of evil hung over me, which not even the excitement of the journey—to me a rare enjoyment—could dispel. I had no heart, somehow, to look at the country scenes around, which in general excited in me so much interest, and I tried to lose myself in summing up my stock of information on the question which I expected to hear discussed by the labourers. I found myself not altogether ignorant. The horrible disclosures of S. G. O., and the barbarous abominations of the Andover Workhouse, then fresh in the public mind, had had their due effect on mine; and, like most thinking artizans, I had acquainted myself tolerably from books and newspapers with the general condition of the country labourers.

I arrived in the midst of a dreary, treeless country, whose broad brown and grey fields were only broken by an occasional line of dark, doleful firs, at a knot of thatched hovels, all sinking and leaning every way but the right, the windows patched with paper, the doorways stopped with filth, which surrounded a beer-shop. That was my destination—unpromising enough for any one but an agitator. If discontent and misery are preparatives for liberty—and they are—so strange and

unlike ours are the ways of God—I was likely enough to find them there.

I was welcomed by my intended host, a little pert, snub-nosed shoemaker, who greeted me as his cousin from London—a relationship which it seemed prudent to accept.

He took me into his little cabin, and there, with the assistance of a shrewd, good-natured wife, shared with me the best he had; and after supper commenced, mysteriously and in trembling, as if the very walls might have ears, a rambling, bitter diatribe on the wrongs and sufferings of the labourers; which went on till late in the night, and which I shall spare my readers: for if they have either brains or hearts, they ought to know more than I can tell them, from the public prints, and, indeed, from their own eyes—although, as a wise man says, there is nothing more difficult than to make people see first the facts which lie under their own nose.

Upon one point, however, which was new to me, he was very fierce—the customs of landlords letting the cottages with their farms, for the mere sake of saving themselves trouble; thus giving up all power of protecting the poor man, and delivering him over, bound hand and foot, even in the matter of his commonest home comforts, to farmers, too penurious, too ignorant, and often too poor, to keep the cottages in a state fit for the habitation of human beings. Thus the poor man's hovel, as well as his labour, became, he told me, a source of profit to the farmer, out of which he wrung the last drop of gain. The necessary repairs were always put off as long as possible—the labourers were robbed of their gardens—the slightest rebellion lost them not only work, but shelter from the elements; the slavery under which they groaned penetrated even to the fireside and to the bedroom.

"And who was the landlord of this parish?"

"Oh! he believed he was a very good sort of man, and uncommon kind to the people where he lived, but that was fifty miles away in another country; and he liked that estate better than this, and never came down here, except for the shooting."

Full of many thoughts, and tired out with my journey, I went up to bed, in the same loft with the cobbler and his wife, and fell asleep, and dreamt of Lillian.

* * * * *

About eight o'clock the next morning I started forth with my guide, the shoemaker, over as desolate a country as men can well conceive. Not a house was to be seen for miles, except the knot of hovels which we had left, and here and there a great dreary lump of farm-buildings, with its yard of yellow stacks. Beneath our feet the earth was iron, and the sky iron above our heads. Dark curdled clouds, "which had built up everywhere an under-roof of doleful grey," swept on before the bitter northern wind, which whistled through the low leafless hedges and rotting wattles, and crisped the dark sodden leaves of the scattered hollies, almost the only trees in sight.

We trudged on, over wide stubbles, with innumerable weeds; over wide fallows, in which the deserted ploughs stood frozen fast; then over clover and grass, burnt black with frost; then over a field of turnips, where we passed a large fold of hurdles, within which some hundred sheep stood, with their heads turned from the cutting blast. All was dreary, idle, silent; no sound or sign of human beings. One wondered where the people lived, who cultivated so vast a tract of civilized, over-peopled, nineteenth-century England. As we came up to the fold, two little boys hailed us from the inside—two little wretches with blue noses and white cheeks, scare-crows of rags and patches, their feet peeping through bursten shoes twice too big for them, who seemed to have shared between them a ragged pair of worsted gloves, and cowered among the sheep, under the shelter of a hurdle, crying and inarticulate with cold.

"What's the matter, boys?"

"Turmits is froze, and us can't turn the handle of the cutter. Do ye gie us a turn, please?"

We scrambled over the hurdles, and gave the miserable little creatures the benefit of ten minutes' labour. They seemed too small for such exertion: their little hands were purple with chilblains, and they were so sorefooted they

could scarcely limp. I was surprised to find them at least three years older than their size and looks denoted, and still more surprised, too, to find that their salary for all this bitter exposure to the elements—such as I believe I could not have endured two days running—was the vast sum of one shilling a week each, Sundays included. "They didn't never go to school, nor to church nether, except just now and then, sometimes—they had to mind the shep."

I went on, sickened with the contrast between the highly-bred, over-fed, fat, thick-woolled animals, with their troughs of turnips and malt-dust, and their racks of rich clover-hay, and their little pent-house of rock-salt, having nothing to do but to eat and sleep, and eat again, and the little half-starved shivering animals who were their slaves. Man the master of the brutes? Bah! As society is now, the brutes are the masters—the horse, the sheep, the bullock, is the master, and the labourer is their slave. "Oh! but the brutes are eaten!" Well; the horses at least are not eaten—they live, like landlords, till they die. And those who are eaten, are certainly not eaten by their human servants. The sheep they fat, another kills, to parody Shelley; and, after all, is not the labourer, as well as the sheep, eaten by you, my dear Society?—devoured body and soul, not the less really because you are longer about the meal, there being an old prejudice against cannibalism, and also against murder—except after the Riot Act has been read.

"What!" shriek the insulted respectabilities, "have we not paid him his wages weekly, and has he not lived upon them?" Yes; and have you not given your sheep and horses their daily wages, and have they not lived on them? You wanted to work them; and they could not work, you know, unless they were alive. But here lies your iniquity: you gave the labourer nothing but his daily food—not even his lodgings; the pigs were not stinted of their wash to pay for their sty-room, the man was; and his wages, thanks to your competitive system, were beaten down deliberately and conscientiously (for was it not according to political economy, and the laws

thereof?) to the minimum on which he could or would work, without the hope or the possibility of saving a farthing. You know how to invest your capital profitably, dear Society, and to save money over and above your income of daily comforts; but what has he saved?—what is he profited by all those years of labour? He has kept body and soul together—perhaps he could have done that without you or your help. But his wages are used up every Saturday night. When he stops working, you have in your pocket the whole real profits of his nearly fifty years' labour, and he has nothing. And then you say that you have not eaten him! You know, in your heart of hearts, that you have. Else, why in Heaven's name do you pay him poor's rates? If, as you say, he has been duly repaid in wages, what is the meaning of that half-a-crown a week?—you owe him nothing. Oh! but the man would starve—common humanity forbids? What now, Society? Give him alms, if you will, on the score of humanity; but do not tax people for his support, whether they choose or not—that were a mere tyranny and robbery. If the landlord's feelings will not allow him to see the labourer starve, let him give, in God's name; but let him not cripple and drain, by compulsory poor-rates, the farmer who has paid him his "just remuneration" of wages, and the parson who probably, out of his scanty income, gives away twice as much in alms as the landlord does out of his superfluous one. No, no; as long as you retain compulsory poor-laws, you confess that it is not merely humane, but just, to pay the labourer more than his wages. You confess yourself in debt to him, over and above an uncertain sum, which it suits you not to define, because such an investigation would expose ugly gaps and patches in that same snug competitive and property world of yours; and, therefore, being the stronger party, you compel your debtor to give up the claim which you confess, for an annuity of half-a-crown a week—that being the just-above-starving-point of the economic thermometer. And yet you say you have not eaten the labourer! You see, we workmen too have our thoughts about political economy, differing slightly from

yours, truly—just as the man who is being hanged may take a somewhat different view of the process from the man who is hanging him. Which view is likely to be the more practical one?

With some such thoughts I walked across the open down, toward a circular camp, the earthwork, probably, of some old British town. Inside it, some thousand or so of labouring people were swarming restlessly round a single large block of stone, some relic of Druid times, on which a tall man stood, his dark figure thrown out in bold relief against the dreary sky. As we pushed through the crowd, I was struck with the wan, haggard look of all faces; their lacklustre eyes and drooping lips, stooping shoulders, heavy, dragging steps, gave them a crushed, dogged air, which was infinitely painful, and bespoke a grade of misery more habitual and degrading than that of the excitable and passionate artisan.

There were many women among them, talking shrilly, and looking even more pinched and wan than the men.

I remarked, also, that many of the crowd carried heavy sticks, pitchforks, and other tools which might be used as fearful weapons—an ugly sign, which I ought to have heeded betimes.

They glared with sullen curiosity at me and my Londoner's clothes, as, with no small feeling of self-importance, I pushed my way to the foot of the stone. The man who stood on it seemed to have been speaking some time. His words, like all I heard that day, were utterly devoid of anything like eloquence or imagination—a dull string of somewhat incoherent complaints, which derived their force only from the intense earnestness, which attested their truthfulness. As far as I can recollect, I will give the substance of what I heard. But, indeed, I heard nothing but what has been bandied about from newspaper to newspaper for years—confessed by all parties, deplored by all parties, but never an attempt made to remedy it.

—"The farmers makes slaves on us. I can't hear no difference between a Christian and a nigger, except they flogs the niggers and starves the Christians; and I don't know which I'd choose. I served Farmer * * * * seven

year, off and on, and arter harvest he tells me he's no more work for me, nor my boy nether, acause he's getting too big for him, so he gets a little 'un instead, and we does nothing; and my boy lies about, getting into bad ways, like hundreds more; and then we goes to board, and they bids us go and look for work; and we goes up next part to London. I couldn't get none; they'd enough to do, they said, to employ their own; and we begs our way home, and goes into the Union; and they turns us out again in two or three days, and promises us work again, and gives us two days' gravel-picking, and then says they has no more for us; and we was sore pinched, and laid a-bed all day; then next board-day we goes to 'em and they gives us one day more—and that threw us off another week, and then next board-day we goes into the Union again for three days, and gets sent out again: and so I've been starving one-half of the time, and they putting us off and on o' purpose like that; and I'll bear it no longer, and that's what I says."

He came down, and a tall, powerful, well-fed man, evidently in his Sunday smock-frock and clean yellow leggings, got up and began:

"I hav'n't no complaint to make about myself. I've a good master, and the parson's a right kind 'un, and that's more than all can say, and the squire's a real gentleman; and my master, he don't need to lower his wages. I gets my ten shillings a week all the year round, and harvesting, and a pig, and a 'lotment—and that's just why I come here. If I can get it, why can't you?"

"Cause our masters baint like yourn."

"No, by George, there baint no money round here like that, I can tell you."

"And why ain't they?" continued the speaker. "There's the shame on it. There's my master can grow five quarters where yourn only grows three; and so he can live and pay like a man; and so he say he don't care for free trade. You know, as well as I, that there's not half o' the land round here grows what it ought. They ain't no money to make it grow more, and besides, they won't employ no hands to keep it clean. I come across

more weeds in one field here, than I've seen for nine year on our farm. Why arn't some of you a-getting they weeds up? It 'ud pay 'em to farm better—and they knows that, but they're too lazy; if they can just get a living off the land, they don't care; and they'd sooner save money out of your wages, than save it by growing more corn—it's easier for 'em, it is. There's the work to be done, and they won't let you do it. There's you crying out for work, and work crying out for you—and neither of you can get to the other. I say that's a shame, I do. I say a poor man's a slave. He daren't leave his parish—nobody won't employ him, as can employ his own folk. And if he stays in his parish, it's just a chance whether he gets a good master or a bad 'un. He can't choose, and that's a shame, it is. Why should he go starving because his master don't care to do the best by the land? If they can't till the land, I say let them get out of it, and let them work it as can. And I think as we ought all to sign a petition to government, to tell 'em all about it; though I don't see as how they could help us, unless they'd make a law to force the squires to put in nobody to a farm as hasn't money to work it fairly."

"I says," said the next speaker, a poor fellow whose sentences were continually broken by a hacking cough, "just what he said. If they can't till the land, let them do it as can. But they won't; they won't let us have a scrap on it, though we'd pay 'em more for it nor ever they'd make for themselves. But they says it 'ud make us too independent, if we had an acre or so o' land; and so it 'ud for they. And so I says as he did—they want to make slaves on us altogether, just to get the flesh and bones off us at their own price. Look you at this here down.—If I had an acre on it, to make a garden on, I'd live well with my wages, off and on. Why, if this here was in garden, it 'ud be worth twenty, forty times o' that it be now. And last spring I lays out o' work from Christmas till barley-sowing, and I goes to the farmer and axes for a bit o' land to dig and plant a few potatoes—and he says, 'You be d—d! If you're minding your garden after hours, you'll not be fit to do a proper

day's work for me in hours—and I shall want you by-and-by, when the weather breaks'—for it was frost most bitter, it was. 'And if you gets potatoes you'll be getting a pig—and then you'll want straw, and meal to fat 'un—and then I'll not trust you in my barn, I can tell ye;' and so there it was. And if I'd had only one half-acre of this here very down as we stands on, as isn't worth five shillings a year—and I'd a given ten shillings for it—my belly wouldn't a been empty now. Oh, they be dogs in the manger, and the Lord 'll reward 'em therefor! First they says they can't afford to work the land 'emselves, and then they wain't let us work it ether. Then they says prices is so low they can't keep us on, and so they lowers our wages; and then when prices goes up ever so much, our wages don't go up with 'em. So, high prices or low prices, it's all the same. With the one we can't buy bread, and with the other we can't get work. I don't mind free trade—not I: to be sure, if the loaf's cheap, we shall be ruined; but if the loaf's dear, we shall be starved, and for that, we is starved now. Nobody don't care for us; for my part, I don't much care for myself. A man must die some time or other. Only I thinks if we could some time or other just see the Queen once, and tell her all about it, she'd take our part, and not see us put upon like that, I do."

"Gentlemen!" cried my guide, the shoemaker, in a somewhat conceited and dictatorial tone, as he skipped up by the speaker's side, and gently shouldered him down—"it ain't like the ancient times, as I've read off, when any poor man as had a petition could come promiscuously to the King's royal presence, and put it direct into his own hand, and be treated like a gentleman. Don't you know as how they locks up the Queen now-a-days, and never lets a poor soul come a-near her, lest she should hear the truth of all their iniquities? Why they never lets her stir without a lot o' dragoons with drawn swords riding all around her; and if you dared to go up to her to ax mercy, whoot! they'd chop your head off before you could say, 'Please your Majesty.' And then the hypocrites say as it's to keep her from being frightened—and that's true—

for it's frightened she'd be, with a vengeance, if she knowed all that they grand folks make poor labourers suffer, to keep themselves in power and great glory. I tell ye, 'tarn't per-practicable at all, to ax the Queen for anything; she's afeard of her life on 'em. You just take my advice, and sign a round-robin to the squires—you tell 'em as you're willing to till the land for 'em, if they'll let you. There's draining and digging enough to be done as 'ud keep ye all in work, arn't there?"

"Ay, ay; there's lots o' work to be done, if so be we could get at it. Everybody knows that."

"Well, you tell 'em that. Tell 'em here's hundreds, and hundreds of ye starving, and willing to work; and then tell 'em, if they won't find ye work, they shall find ye meat. There's lots o' victuals in their larders now; haven't you as good a right to it as their jackanapes o' footmen? The squires is at the bottom of it all. What do you stupid fellows go grumbling at the farmers for? Don't they squires tax the land twenty or thirty shillings an acre; and what do they do for that? The best of 'em, if he gets five thousand a year out o' the land, don't give back five hundred in charity, or schools, or poor-rates—and what's that to speak of? And the main of 'em—curse 'em!—they drains the money out o' the land, and takes it up to London, or into foreign parts, to spend on fine clothes and fine dinners; or throws it away at elections, to make folks beastly drunk, and sell their souls for money—and we gets no good on it. I'll tell you what it's come to, my men—that we can't afford no more landlords. We can't afford 'em, and that's the truth of it!"

The crowd growled a dubious assent.

"Oh, yes, you can grumble at the farmers, acause you deals with them first-hand; but you be too stupid to do aught but hunt by sight. I be an old dog, and I hunts cunning. I sees farther than my nose, I does. I larnt politics to London when I was a prentice; and I ain't forgotten the plans of it. Look you here. The farmers, they say they can't live unless they can make four rents, one for labour, and one for stock, and one for rent, and one for themselves; ain't that about right? Very well;

just now they can't make four rents—in course they can't. Now, who's to suffer for that?—the farmer as works, or the labourer as works, or the landlord as does nothing? But he takes care on himself. He won't give up his rent—not he. Perhaps he might give back ten per cent., and what's that?—two shillings an acre, maybe. What's that, if corn falls two pound a load, and more? Then the farmer gets a stinting; and he can't stint hisself, he's bad enough off already; he's forty shillings out o' pocket on every load of wheat—that's eight shillings, maybe, on every acre of his land on a four-course shift—and where's the eight shillings to come from, for the landlord's only given him back two on it? He can't stint hisself, he daren't stint his stock, and so he stints the labourers; and so it's you as pays the landlord's rent—you, my boys, out o' your flesh and bones, you do—and you can't afford it any longer, by the look of you—so just tell 'em so!"

This advice seemed to me as sadly unpractical as the rest. In short, there seemed to be no hope, no purpose among them—and they felt it; and I could hear, from the running comment of murmurs, that they were getting every moment more fierce and desperate at the contemplation of their own helplessness—a mood which the next speech was not likely to soften.

A pale, thin woman scrambled up on the stone, and stood there, her scanty and patched garments fluttering in the bitter breeze, as, with face sharpened with want, and eyes fierce with misery, she began, in a querulous, scornful falsetto:

"I am an honest woman. I brought up seven children decently; and never axed the parish for a farden, till my husband died. Then they tells me I can support myself and mine—and so I does. Early and late I hoed turmits, and early and late I rep, and left the children at home to mind each other; and one on 'em fell into the fire, and is gone to heaven, blessed angel! and two more it pleased the Lord to take in the fever; and the next, I hope, will soon be out o' this miserable sinful world. But look you here: three weeks agone, I goes to the board. I had no work. They say they could not relieve me for the first

week, because I had money yet to take.—The hypocrites! they knowing as I couldn't but owe it all, and a lot more beside. Next week they sends the officer to inquire. That was ten days gone, and we starving. Then, on board-day, they gives me two loaves. Then, next week, they takes it off again. And when I goes over (five miles) to the board to ax why—they'd find me work—and they never did; so we goes on starving for another week—for no one wouldn't trust us; how could they when we was in debt already a whole lot?—you're all in debt!"

"That we are."

"There's some here as never made ten shillings a week in their lives, as owes twenty pounds at the shop!"

"Ay, and more—and how's a man ever to pay that?"

"So this week, when I comes, they offers me the house. Would I go into the house? They'd be glad to have me, acause I'm strong and hearty and a good nurse. But would I, that am an honest woman, go to live with they offscourings—they"—(she used a strong word)—"would I be parted from my children? Would I let them hear the talk, and keep the company as they will there, and learn all sorts o' sins that they never heard on, blessed be God! I'll starve first, and see them starve too—though, Lord knows, it's hard.—Oh! it's hard," she said, bursting into tears, "to leave them as I did this morning, crying after their breakfasts, and I none to give 'em. I've got no bread—where should I? I've got no fire—how can I give one shilling and sixpence a hundred for coals? And if I did, who'd fetch 'em home? And if I dared break a hedge for a knitch o' wood, they'd put me in prison, they would, with the worst. What be I to do? What be you going to do? That's what I came here for. What be ye going to do for us women—us that starve and stint, and wear our hands off for you men and your children, and get hard words, and hard blows from you? Oh! if I was a man, I know what I'd do, I do! But I don't think you be men three parts o' you, or you'd not see the widow and the orphan starve as you do, and sit quiet and grumble, as long as you can keep your own bodies and souls together. Eh! ye cowards!"

What more she would have said in her excitement, which had risen to an absolute scream, I cannot tell; but some prudent friend pulled her down off the stone, to be succeeded by a speaker more painful, if possible; an aged blind man, the worn-out melancholy of whose slow, feeble voice made my heart sink, and hushed the murmuring crowd into silent awe.

Slowly he turned his grey, sightless head from side to side, as if feeling for the faces below him—and then began:

"I heard you was all to be here—and I suppose you are; and I said I would come—though I suppose they'll take off my pay, if they hear of it. But I knows the reason of it, and the bad times and all. The Lord revealed it to me as clear as day, four years agone come Easter-tide. It's all along of our sins, and our wickedness—because we forgot Him—it is. I mind the old war times, what times they was, when there was smuggled brandy up and down in every public, and work more than hands could do. And then, how we all forgot the Lord, and went after our own lusts and pleasures—squires and parsons, and farmers and labouring folk, all alike. They oughted to ha' knowed better—and we oughted too. Many's the Sunday I spent in skittle-playing and cock-fighting, and the pound I spent in beer, as might ha' been keeping me now. We was an evil and perverse generation—and so one o' my sons went for a sodger, and was shot at Waterloo, and the other fell into evil ways, and got sent across seas—and I be left alone for my sins. But the Lord was very gracious to me and showed me how it was all a judgment on my sins, he did. He has turned his face from us, and that's why we're troubled. And so I don't see no use in this meeting. It won't do no good; nothing won't do us no good, unless we all repent of our wicked ways, our drinking, and our dirt, and our love-children, and our picking and stealing, and gets the Lord to turn our hearts, and to come back again, and have mercy on us, and take us away speedily out of this wretched world, where there's nothing but misery and sorrow, into His everlasting glory, Amen! Folks

say as the day of judgment's a coming soon—and I partly think so myself. I wish it was all over, and we in heaven above; and that's all I have to say."

It seemed a not unnatural revulsion, when a tall, fierce man, with a forbidding squint, sprung jauntily on the stone, and setting his arms a-kimbo, broke out:

"Here be I, Blinkey, and I has as good a right to speak as ere a one. You're all blarned fools, you are. So's that old blind buffer there. You sticks like pigs in a gate, hollering and squeeking, and never helping yourselves. Why can't you do like me? I never does no work—darned if I'll work to please the farmers. The rich folks robs me, and I robs them, and that's fair and equal. You only turn poachers—you only go stealing turmits, and fire-ud, and all as you can find—and then you'll not need to work. Arn't it yourn? The game's no one's, is it now?—you know that. And if you takes turmits or corn, they're yourn—you helped to grow 'em. And if you're put to prison, I tell ye, it's a darned deal warmer, and better victuals too, than ever a one of you gets at home, let alone the Union. Now I knows the dodge. Whenever my wife's ready for her trouble, I gets cotched; then I lives like a prince in gaol, and she goes to the workus; and when it's all over, start fair again. Oh, you block-heads!—to stand here shivering with empty bellies.—You just go down to the farm and burn they stacks over the old rascal's head; and then they that let you starve now, will be forced to keep you then. If you can't get your share of the poor-rates, try the county-rates, my bucks—you can get fat on them at the Queen's expense—and that's more than you'll do in ever a Union as I hear on. Who'll come down and pull the farm about the folks' ears? Warn't he as turned five on yer off last week? and ain't he more corn there than 'ud feed you all round this day, and won't sell it, just because he's waiting till folks are starved enough, and prices rise? Curse the old villain!—who'll help to disappoint him 'o that? Come along!"

A confused murmur arose, and a movement in the crowd. I felt that now or never was the time to speak.

If once the spirit of mad aimless riot broke loose, I had not only no chance of a hearing, but every likelihood of being implicated in deeds which I abhorred; and I sprung on the stone and entreated a few minutes' attention, telling them that I was a deputation from one of the London Chartist committees. This seemed to turn the stream of their thoughts, and they gaped in stupid wonder at me as I began hardly less excited than themselves.

I assured them of the sympathy of the London working men, made a comment on their own speeches—which the reader ought to be able to make for himself—and told them that I had come to entreat their assistance towards obtaining such a parliamentary representation as would secure them their rights. I explained the idea of the Charter, and begged for their help in carrying it out.

To all which they answered surlily, that they did not know anything about politics—that what they wanted was bread.

I went on, more vehement than ever, to show them how all their misery sprung (as I then fancied) from being unrepresented—how the laws were made by the rich for the poor, and not by all for all—how the taxes bit deep into the necessaries of the labourer, and only nibbled at the luxuries of the rich—how the criminal-code exclusively attacked the crimes to which the poor were prone, while it dared not interfere with the subtler iniquities of the high-born and wealthy—how poor-rates, as I have just said, were a confession on the part of society that the labourer was not fully remunerated. I tried to make them see that their interest, as much as common justice, demanded that they should have a voice in the councils of the nation, such as would truly proclaim their wants, their rights, their wrongs; and I have seen no reason since then to unsay my words.

To all which they answered, that their stomachs were empty, and they wanted bread. "And bread we will have!"

"Go, then," I cried, losing my self-possession between disappointment and the maddening desire of influence—and, indeed, who could hear their story, or even look upon

their faces, and not feel some indignation stir in him, unless self-interest had drugged his heart and conscience —"go," I cried, "and get bread! After all, you have a right to it. No man is bound to starve. There are rights above all laws, and the right to live is one. Laws were made for man, not man for laws. If you had made the laws yourselves, they might bind you even in this extremity; but they were made in spite of you—against you. They rob you, crush you; even now they deny you bread. God has made the earth free to all, like the air and sunshine, and you are shut out from off it. The earth is yours, for you till it. Without you it would be a desert. Go and demand your share of that corn, the fruit of your own industry. What matter, if your tyrants imprison, murder you?—they can but kill your bodies at once, instead of killing them piecemeal, as they do now; and your blood will cry against them from the ground!!—Ay, Woe!"—I went on, carried away by feelings for which I shall make no apology; for, however confused, there was, and is, and ever will be, a God's truth in them, as this generation will find out at the moment when its own serene self-satisfaction crumbles underneath it—"Woe unto those that grind the faces of the poor! Woe unto those who add house to house, and field to field, till they stand alone in the land, and there is no room left for the poor man! The wages of their reapers, which they have held back by fraud, cry out against them; and their cry has entered into the ears of the God of heaven——"

But I had no time to finish. The murmur swelled into a roar for "Bread! Bread!" My hearers had taken me at my word. I had raised the spirit; could I command him, now he was abroad?

"Go to Jennings's farm!"

"No! he ain't no corn, he sold un' all last week."

"There's plenty at the Hall farm! Rouse out the old steward!"

And, amid yells and execrations, the whole mass poured down the hill, sweeping me away with them. I was shocked and terrified at their threats. I tried again and

again to stop and harangue them. I shouted myself hoarse about the duty of honesty; warned them against pillage and violence; entreated them to take nothing but the corn which they actually needed; but my voice was drowned in the uproar. Still I felt myself in a measure responsible for their conduct; I had helped to excite them, and dare not, in honour, desert them; and trembling, I went on, prepared to see the worst; following, as a flag of distress, a mouldy crust, brandished on the point of a pitchfork.

Bursting through the rotting and half-fallen palings, we entered a wide, rushy, neglected park, and along an old gravel road, now green with grass, we opened on a sheet of frozen water, and, on the opposite bank, the huge square corpse of a hall, the close-shuttered windows of which gave it a dead and ghastly look, except where here and there a single one showed, as through a black empty eye-socket, the dark unfurnished rooms within. On the right, beneath us, lay, amid tall elms, a large mass of farm-buildings, into the yard of which the whole mob rushed tumultuously—just in time to see an old man on horseback dart out and gallop hatless up the park, amid the yells of the mob.

"The old rascal's gone! and he'll call up the yeomanry. We must be quick, boys!" shouted one, and the first signs of plunder showed themselves in an indiscriminate chase after various screaming geese and turkeys; while a few of the more steady went up to the house-door, and knocking, demanded sternly the granary keys.

A fat virago planted herself in the doorway, and commenced railing at them, with the cowardly courage which the fancied immunity of their sex gives to coarse women; but she was hastily shoved aside, and took shelter in an upper room, where she stood screaming and cursing at the window.

The invaders returned, cramming their mouths with bread, and chopping asunder flitches of bacon. The granary doors were broken open, and the contents scrambled for, amid immense waste, by the starving wretches. It was a sad sight. Here was a poor shivering

woman, hiding scraps of food under her cloak, and hurrying out of the yard to the children she had left at home. There was a tall man, leaning against the palings, gnawing ravenously at the same loaf as a little boy, who had scrambled up behind him. Then a huge blackguard came whistling up to me, with a can of ale. "Drink, my beauty! you're dry with hollering by now!"

"The ale is neither yours nor mine; I won't touch it."

"Darn your buttons! You said the wheat was ourn, acause we growed it—and thereby so's the beer—for we growed the barley too.".

And so thought the rest; for the yard was getting full of drunkards, a woman or two among them, reeling knee-deep in the loose straw among the pigs.

"Thresh out they ricks!" roared another.

"Get out the threshing-machine!"

"You harness the horses!"

"No! there bain't no time. Yeomanry 'll be here. You mun leave the ricks."

"Darned if we do. Old Woods shan't get naught by they."

"Fire 'em, then, and go on to Slater's farm!"

"As well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb," hiccuped Blinkey, as he rushed through the yard with a lighted brand. I tried to stop him, but fell on my face in the deep straw, and got round the barns to the rick-yard just in time to here a crackle—there was no mistaking it; the windward stack was in a blaze of fire.

I stood awe-struck—I cannot tell how long—watching how the live flame-snakes crept and hissed, and leapt and roared, and rushed in long horizontal jets from stack to stack before the howling wind, and fastened their fiery talons on the barn-eaves, and swept over the peaked roofs, and hurled themselves in fiery flakes into the yard beyond—the food of man, the labour of years, devoured in aimless ruin!—Was it my doing? Was it not?

At last I recollected myself, and ran round again into the straw-yard, where the fire was now falling fast. The only thing which saved the house was the weltering mass of bullocks, pigs, and human beings drunk and sober,

which trampled out unwittingly the flames as fast as they caught.

The fire had seized the roofs of the cart-stables, when a great lubberly boy blubbered out:—

"Git my horses out! git my horses out o' the fire! I be so fond o' mun!"

"Well, they ain't done no harm, poor beasts!" And a dozen men ran in to save them; but the poor wretches, screaming with terror, refused to stir. I never knew what became of them—but their shrieks still haunt my dreams. . . . .

The yard now became a pandemonium. The more ruffianly part of the mob—and alas! there were but too many of them—hurled the furniture out of the windows, or ran off with anything that they could carry. In vain I expostulated, threatened; I was answered by laughter, curses, frantic dances, and brandished plunder. Then I first found out how large a portion of rascality shelters itself under the wing of every crowd; and at the moment, I almost excused the rich for overlooking the real sufferers, in indignation at the rascals. But even the really starving majority, whose faces proclaimed the grim fact of their misery, seemed gone mad for the moment. The old crust of sullen, dogged patience had broken up, and their whole souls had exploded into reckless fury and brutal revenge—and yet there was no hint of violence against the red fat woman, who, surrounded with her blubbering children, stood screaming and cursing at the first-floor window, getting redder and fatter at every scream. The worst personality she heard was a roar of laughter, in which, such is poor humanity, I could not but join, as her little starved drab of a maid-of-all-work ran out of the door, with a bundle of stolen finery under her arm, and high above the roaring of the flames, and the shouts of the rioters, rose her mistress's yell.

"O Betsy! Betsy! you little awdacious unremorseful hussy!—a running away with my best bonnet and shawl!"

The laughter soon, however, subsided, when a man rushed breathless into the yard, shouting, "The yeomaury!"

At that sound, to my astonishment, a general panic ensued. The miserable wretches never stopped to enquire how many, or how far off, they were—but scrambled to every outlet of the yard, trampling each other down in their hurry. I leaped up on the wall, and saw, galloping down the park, a mighty armament of some fifteen men, with a tall officer at their head, mounted on a splendid horse.

"There they be! there they be! all the varmers, and young Squire Clayton wi' mun, on his grey hunter! O Lord! O Lord! and all their swords drawn!"

I thought of the old story in Herodotus—how the Scythian masters returned from war to the rebel slaves who had taken possession of their lands and wives, and brought them down on their knees with terror, at the mere sight of the old dreaded dog-whips.

I did not care to run. I was utterly disgusted, disappointed with myself—the people. I longed, for the moment, to die and leave it all; and left almost alone, sat down on a stone, buried my head between my hands, and tried vainly to shut out from my ears the roaring of the fire.

At that moment "Blinkey" staggered out past me and against me, a writing-desk in his hands, shouting, in his drunken glory, "I've vound ut at last! I've got the old fellow's money! Hush! What a vule I be, hollering like that!"—And he was going to sneak off, with a face of drunken cunning, when I sprung up and seized him by the throat.

"Rascal! robber! lay that down! Have you not done mischief enough already?"

"I wain't have no sharing. What? Do you want un yourself, eh? Then we'll see who's the stronger!"

And in an instant he shook me from him, and dealt me a blow with the corner of the desk, that laid me on the ground.....

I just recollect the tramp of the yeomanry horses, and the gleam and jingle of their arms, as they galloped into the yard. I caught a glimpse of the tall young officer, as his great grey horse swept through the air, over the high

yard-pales—a feat to me utterly astonishing. Half a dozen long strides — the wretched ruffian, staggering across the field with his booty, was caught up.—The clear blade gleamed in the air—and then a fearful yell—and after that I recollect nothing.

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Slowly I recovered my consciousness. I was lying on a truckle-bed—stone walls and a grated window! A man stood over me with a large bunch of keys in his hand. He had been wrapping my head with wet towels. I knew, instinctively, where I was.

"Well, young man," said he, in a not unkindly tone—"and a nice job you've made of it! Do you know where you are?"

"Yes," answered I, quietly; "in D**** gaol."

"Exactly so!"

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CHAPTER XXIX.

THE TRIAL.

THE day was come—quickly, thank Heaven; and I stood at the bar, with four or five miserable, haggard labourers, to take my trial for sedition, riot, and arson.

I had passed the intervening weeks half stupified with the despair of utter disappointment; disappointment at myself and my own loss of self-possession, which had caused all my misfortune,—perhaps, too, and the thought was dreadful, that of my wretched fellow-sufferers—disappointment with the labourers, with The Cause; and when the thought came over me, in addition, that I was irreparably disgraced in the eyes of my late patrons, parted for ever from Lillian by my own folly, I laid down my head and longed to die.

Then, again, I would recover awhile, and pluck up heart. I would plead my cause myself—I would testify against the tyrants to their face — I would say no longer to their besotted slaves, but to the men themselves, "Go to, ye rich men, weep and howl! The hire of your labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is by you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them that have reaped hath entered into the ears of the Lord God of Hosts." I would brave my fate—I would die protesting, and glory in my martyrdom. But——

"Martyrdom?" said Mackaye, who had come down to D * * * *, and was busy night and day about my trial. "Ye'll just leave alone the martyr dodge, my puir bairn. Ye're na martyr at a', ye'll understand, but a vera foolish callant, that lost his temper, an' cast his pearls before

swine—an' very questionable pearls they, too, to judge by the price they fetch i' the market."

And then my heart sank again. And a few days before the trial a letter came, evidently in my cousin's handwriting, though only signed with his initials:

"SIR,—You are in a very great scrape—you will not deny that. How you will get out of it depends on your own common sense. You probably won't be hanged—for nobody believes that you had a hand in burning the farm; but, unless you take care, you will be transported. Call yourself John Nokes; entrust your case to a clever lawyer, and keep in the background. I warn you, as a friend—if you try to speechify, and play the martyr, and let out who you are, the respectable people who have been patronizing you will find it necessary for their own sakes to clap a stopper on you for good and all, to make you out an impostor and a swindler, and get you out of the way for life: while, if you are quiet, it will suit them to be quiet too, and say nothing about you, if you say nothing about them; and then there will be a chance that they, as well as your own family, will do everything in their power to hush the matter up. So, again, don't let out your real name; and instruct your lawyers to know nothing about the W.'s; and then, perhaps, the Queen's counsel will know nothing about them either. Mind—you are warned, and woe to you if you are fool enough not to take the warning. "G. L."

Plead in a false name! Never, so help me Heaven! To go into court with a lie in my mouth—to make myself an impostor—probably a detected one—it seemed the most cunning scheme for ruining me, which my evil genius could have suggested, whether or not it might serve his own selfish ends. But as for the other hints, they seemed not unreasonable, and promised to save me trouble; while the continued pressure of anxiety and responsibility was getting intolerable to my over-wearied brain. So I showed the letter to Mackaye, who then told me that he had taken it for granted that I should come to

my right mind, and had therefore already engaged an old compatriot as attorney, and the best counsel which money could procure.

"But where did you get the money? You have not surely been spending your own savings on me?"

"I canna say that I wadna ha' so dune, in case o' need. But the men in town just subscribit; puir honest fellows."

"What! is my folly to be the cause of robbing them of their slender earnings? Never, Mackaye! Besides, they cannot have subscribed enough to pay the barrister whom you just mentioned. Tell me the whole truth, or, positively, I will plead my cause myself."

"Aweel, then, there was a bit bank-note or twa cam' to hand—I canna say whaur fra'. But they that sent it direckit it to be expendit in the defence o' the sax prisoners—whereof ye make ane."

Again a world of fruitless conjecture. It must be the same unknown friend who had paid my debt to my cousin—Lillian?

* * * * *

And so the day was come. I am not going to make a long picturesque description of my trial—trials have become lately quite hackneyed subjects, stock properties for the fiction-mongers—neither, indeed, could I do so, if I would. I recollect nothing of that day, but fragments—flashes of waking existence, scattered up and down in what seemed to me a whole life of heavy, confused, painful dreams, with the glare of all those faces concentrated on me—those countless eyes which I could not, could not meet—stony, careless, unsympathizing—not even angry—only curious. If they had but frowned on me, insulted me, gnashed their teeth on me, I could have glared back defiance; as it was, I stood cowed and stupified, a craven by the side of cravens.

Let me see—what can I recollect? Those faces—faces—everywhere faces—a faint, sickly smell of flowers—a perpetual whispering and rustling of dresses—and all through it, the voice of some one talking, talking—I seldom knew what, or whether it was counsel, witness, judge,

or prisoner, that was speaking. I was like one asleep at a foolish lecture, who hears in dreams, and only wakes when the prosing stops. Was it not prosing? What was it to me what they said? They could not understand me—my motives—my excuses; the whole pleading, on my side as well as the crown's, seemed one huge fallacy—beside the matter altogether—never touching the real point at issue, the eternal moral equity of my deeds or misdeeds. I had no doubt that it would all be conducted quite properly, and fairly, and according to the forms of law; but what was law to me—I wanted justice. And so I let them go on their own way, conscious of but one thought—was Lillian in the court?

I dared not look and see. I dared not lift up my eyes toward the gaudy rows of ladies who had crowded to the "interesting trial of the D * * * * rioters." The torture of anxiety was less than that of certainty might be, and I kept my eyes down, and wondered how on earth the attorneys had found in so simple a case enough to stuff those great blue bags.

When, however, anything did seem likely to touch on a reality, I woke up forthwith, in spite of myself. I recollect well, for instance, a squabble about challenging the jurymen; and my counsel's voice of pious indignation, as he asked, "Do you call these agricultural gentlemen, and farmers, however excellent and respectable—on which point Heaven forbid that I, &c., &c.—the prisoner's 'pares,' peers, equals, or likes? What single interest, opinion, or motive, have they in common, but the universal one of self-interest, which, in this case, happens to pull in exactly opposite directions? Your Lordship has often animadverted fully and boldly on the practice of allowing a bench of squires to sit in judgment on a poacher; surely it is quite as unjust that agricultural rioters should be tried by a jury of the very class against whom they are accused of rebelling."

"Perhaps my learned brother would like a jury of rioters?" suggested some Queen's counsel.

"Upon my word, then, it would be much the fairer plan."

I wondered whether he would have dared to say as much in the street outside—and relapsed into indifference. I believe there was some long delay, and wrangling about law-quibbles, which seemed likely at one time to quash the whole prosecution, but I was rather glad than sorry to find that it had been overruled. It was all a play, a game of bowls—the bowls happening to be human heads—got up between the lawyers, for the edification of society; and it would have been a pity not to play it out, according to the rules and regulations thereof.

As for the evidence, its tenor may be easily supposed from my story. There were those who could swear to my language at the camp. I was seen accompanying the mob to the farm, and haranguing them. The noise was too great for the witnesses to hear all I said, but they were certain I talked about the sacred name of liberty. The farmer's wife had seen me run round to the stacks when they were fired—whether just before or just after, she never mentioned. She had seen me running up and down in front of the house, talking loudly, and gesticulating violently; she saw me, too, struggling with another rioter for her husband's desk;—and the rest of the witnesses, some of whom I am certain I had seen busy plundering, though they were ready to swear that they had been merely accidental passers-by, seemed to think that they proved their own innocence, and testified their pious indignation, by avoiding carefully any fact which could excuse me. But, somehow, my counsel thought differently; and cross-examined, and bullied, and tormented, and misstated—as he was bound to do; and so one witness after another, clumsy and cowardly enough already, was driven by his engines of torture, as if by a pitiless spell, to deny half that he had deposed truly, and confess a great deal that was utterly false—till confusion became worse confounded, and there seemed no truth anywhere, and no falsehood either, and "naught was everything, and everything was naught;" till I began to have doubts whether the riot had ever occurred at all—and, indeed, doubts of my own identity also, when I had heard the counsel for the crown impute to me personally, as in

duty bound, every seditious atrocity which had been committed either in England or France since 1793. To him, certainly, I did listen tolerably; it was "as good as a play." Atheism, blasphemy, vitriol-throwing, and community of women, were among my lighter offences—for had I not actually been engaged in a plot for the destruction of property? How did the court know that I had not spent the night before the riot, as "the doctor" and his friends did before the riots of 1839, in drawing lots for the estates of the surrounding gentlemen, with my deluded dupes and victims?—for of course I, and not want of work, had deluded them into rioting; at least, they never would have known that they were starving, if I had not stirred up their evil passions by daring to inform them of that otherwise impalpable fact. I, the only Chartist there? Might there not have been dozens of them?—emissaries from London, dressed up as starving labourers, and rheumatic old women? There were actually traces of a plan for seizing all the ladies in the country, and setting up a seraglio of them in D * * * * Cathedral. How did the court know that there was not one?

Ay, now indeed? and how did I know either? I really began to question whether the man might not be right after all. The whole theory seemed so horribly coherent—possible, natural. I might have done it, under possession of the devil, and forgotten it in excitement—I might—perhaps I did. And if there, why not elsewhere? Perhaps I had helped Jourdan Coupe-tête at Lyons, and been king of the Munster Anabaptists—why not? What matter? When would this eternity of wigs, and bonnets, and glaring windows, and ear-grinding prate and jargon, as of a diabolic universe of street organs, end—end—end—and I get quietly hanged, and done with it all for ever?

Oh, the horrible length of that day! It seemed to me as if I had been always on my trial, ever since I was born. I wondered at times how many years ago it had all begun. I felt what a far stronger and more single-hearted patriot than I, poor Somerville, says of himself under the torture of the sergeant's cat, in a passage, whose

horrible simplicity and unconscious pathos have haunted me ever since I read it; how, when only fifty out of his hundred lashes had fallen on the bleeding back, "*The time since they began was like a long period of life: I felt as if I had lived all the time of my real life in torture, and that the days when existence had a pleasure in it were a dream long, long gone by.*"

The reader may begin to suspect that I was fast going mad; and I believe I was. If he has followed my story with a human heart, he may excuse me of any extreme weakness, if I did at moments totter on the verge of that abyss.

What saved me, I believe now, was the keen, bright look of love and confidence which flashed on me from Crossthwaite's glittering eyes, when he was called forward as a witness to my character. He spoke out like a man, I hear, that day. But the counsel for the crown tried to silence him triumphantly, by calling on him to confess himself a Chartist; as if a man must needs be a liar and a villain because he holds certain opinions about the franchise! However that was, I heard, the general opinion of the court. And then Crossthwaite lost his temper and called the Queen's counsel a hired bully, and so went down; having done, as I was told afterwards, no good to me.

And then there followed a passage of tongue fence between Mackaye and some barrister, and great laughter at the barrister's expense; and then I heard the old man's voice rise thin and clear:

"Let him that is without sin amang ye, cast the first stane!"

And as he went down he looked at me—a look full of despair. I never had had a ray of hope from the beginning; but now I began to think whether men suffered much when they were hung, and whether one woke at once into the next life, or had to wait till the body had returned to the dust, and watch the ugly process of one's own decay. I was not afraid of death—I never experienced that sensation. I am not physically brave. I am as thoroughly afraid of pain as any child

can be; but that next world has never offered any prospect to me, save boundless food for my insatiable curiosity.

* * * * *

But at that moment my attorney thrust into my hand a little dirty scrap of paper. "Do you know this man?" I read it.

"SIR,—I wull tell all truthe. Mr. Locke is a murdered man if he be hanged. Lev me spek out, for love of the Lord.

"J. DAVIS."

No. I never had heard of him; and I let the paper fall.

A murdered man? I had known that all along. Had not the Queen's counsel been trying all day to murder me, as was their duty, seeing that they got their living thereby?

A few moments after, a labouring man was in the witness-box; and to my astonishment, telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

I will not trouble the reader with his details, for they were simply and exactly what I have already stated. He was badgered, bullied, cross-examined, but nothing could shake him. With that dogged honesty, and laconic dignity, which is the good side of the English peasant's character, he stood manfully to his assertion—that I had done everything that words or actions could do to prevent violence, even to the danger of my own personal safety. He swore to the words which I used when trying to wrest the desk from the man who had stolen it; and when the Queen's counsel asked him, tauntingly, who had set him on bringing his new story there at the eleventh hour, he answered, equally to the astonishment of his questioner, and of me,

"Muster Locke, hisself."

"What! the prisoner?" almost screamed the counsellor, who fancied, I suppose, that he had stumbled on a confession of unblushing bribery.

"Yes, he; he there. As he went up over hill to meeting he met my two boys a shep-minding; and, because the cutter was froze, he stop and turn the handle for 'em for a matter of ten minutes; and I was coming up over field, and says I, I'll hear what that chap's got to say—there can't be no harm in going up arter the likes of he, for, says I to myself, a man can't have got any great wickedness a plotting in he's head, when he'll stop a ten minutes to help two boys as he never sot eyes on afore in his life; and I think their honours 'll say the same."

Whether my reader will agree or not with the worthy fellow, my counsel, I need not say, did, and made full use of his hint. All the previous evidence was now discovered to have corroborated the last witness, except where it had been notoriously overthrown. I was extolled as a miracle of calm benevolence; and black became grey, and grey became spotless white, and the whole feeling of the court seemed changed in my favour; till the little attorney popped up his head and whispered to me:

"By George! that last witness has saved your life."

To which I answered, "Very well"—and turned stupidly back upon that nightmare thought—was Lillian in the court?

* * * * *

At last, a voice, the judge's I believe, for it was grave, gentle, almost compassionate, asked us one by one whether we had anything to say in our own defence. I recollect an indistinct murmur from one after another of the poor semi-brutes on my left; and then my attorney looking up to me, made me aware that I was expected to speak. On the moment, somehow, my whole courage returned to me. I felt that I must unburden my heart, now or never. With a sudden effort I roused myself, and looking fixedly and proudly at the reverend face opposite, began:

"The utmost offence which has been proved against me is a few bold words, producing consequences as unexpected as illogical. If the stupid ferocity with which my words were misunderstood, as by a horde of savages rather than Englishmen;—if the moral and physical condition of these prisoners at my side;—of those witnesses who

have borne testimony against me, miserable white slaves, miscalled free labourers;—ay, if a single walk through the farms and cottages on which this mischief was bred, affords no excuse for one indignant sentence——"

There she was! There she had been all the time—right opposite to me, close to the judge—cold, bright, curious—smiling! And as our eyes met, she turned away, and whispered gaily something to a young man who sat beside her.

Every drop of blood in my body rushed into my forehead; the court, the windows, and the faces, whirled round and round, and I fell senseless on the floor of the dock.

* * * * *

I next recollect some room or other in the gaol, Mackaye with both my hands in his; and the rough kindly voice of the gaoler congratulating me on having "only got three years."

"But you didn't show half a good pluck," said some one. "There's two on 'em transported, took it as bold as brass, and thanked the judge for getting 'em out 'o this starving place 'free gracious for nothing," says they."

"Ah!" quoth the little attorney, rubbing his hands, "you should have seen * * * * and * * * * after the row in '42! They were the boys for the Bull Ring! Gave a barrister as good as he brought, eh, Mr. Mackaye? My small services, you remember, were of no use, really no use at all—quite ashamed to send in my little account. Managed the case themselves, like two patriotic parties as they were, with a degree of forensic acuteness, inspired by the consciousness of a noble cause—Ahem! You remember, friend M.? Grand triumphs those, eh?"

"Ay," said Sandy, "I mind them unco weel—they cost me a' my few savings, mair by token; an' mony a braw fallow paid for ither folks' sins that tide. But my puir laddie here's no made o' that stuff. He's ower thin-skinned for a patriot."

"Ah, well—this little taste of British justice will thicken his hide for him, eh?" And the attorney chuckled and winked. "He'll come out again as tough as a bull dog, and as surly too. Eh, Mr. Mackaye?—eh?"

"'Deed, then, I'm unco sair afeard that your opeenion is no a'thegither that improbable," answered Sandy with a drawl of unusual solemnity.

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CHAPTER XXX.

PRISON THOUGHTS.

I WAS alone in my cell.

Three years' imprisonment! Thirty-six months!—one thousand and ninety-five days—and twenty-four whole hours in each of them! Well—I should sleep half the time: one-third at least. Perhaps I should not be able to sleep! To lie awake, and think—there! the thought was horrible—it was all horrible. To have three whole years cut out of my life, instead of having before me, as I had always as yet had, a mysterious Eldorado of new schemes and hopes, possible developments, possible triumphs, possible bliss—to have nothing, nothing before me but blank and stagnation, dead loss and waste: and then to go out again, and start once more where I had left off yesterday!

It should not be! I would not lose these years! I would show myself a man; they should feel my strength just when they fancied they had crushed me utterly! They might bury me, but I should rise again!—I should rise again more glorious, perhaps to be henceforth immortal, and live upon the lips of men. I would educate myself; I would read—what would I not read? These three years should be a time of sacred retirement and contemplation, as of Thebaid Anchorite, or Mahomet in his Arabian cave. I would write pamphlets that should thunder through the land, and make tyrants tremble on their thrones! All England—at least all crushed and suffering hearts—should break forth at my fiery words into one roar of indignant sympathy. No—

I would write a poem; I would concentrate all my experience, my aspirations, all the hopes, and wrongs, and sorrows of the poor, into one garland of thorns—one immortal epic of suffering. What should I call it? And I set to work deliberately—such a thing is man—to think of a title.

I looked up, and my eye caught the close bars of the little window; and then came over me, for the first time, the full meaning of that word—Prison; that word which the rich use so lightly, knowing well that there is no chance, in these days, of there ever finding themselves in one; for the higher classes never break the laws—seeing that they have made them to fit themselves. Ay, I was in prison. I could not go out or come in at will. I was watched, commanded at every turn. I was a brute animal, a puppet, a doll, that children put away in a cupboard, and there it lies. And yet my whole soul was as wide, fierce, roving, struggling as ever. Horrible contradiction! The dreadful sense of helplessness, the crushing weight of necessity, seemed to choke me. The smooth white walls, the smooth white ceiling, seemed squeezing in closer and closer on me, and yet dilating into vast inane infinities, just as the merest knot of mould will transform itself, as one watches it, and nothing else, into enormous cliffs, long slopes of moor, and spurs of mountain-range. Oh, those smooth white walls and ceilings! If there had but been a print—a stain of dirt—a cobweb, to fleck their unbroken ghastliness! They stared at me, like grim, impassive, featureless formless fiends; all the more dreadful for their sleek, hypocritic cleanliness—purity as of a saint-inquisitor watching with spotless conscience the victim on the rack. They choked me—I gasped for breath, stretched out my arms, rolled shrieking on the floor—the narrow chequered glimpse of free blue sky, seen through the window, seemed to fade dimmer and dimmer, farther and farther off. I sprang up, as if to follow it—rushed to the bars, shook and wrenched at them with my thin, puny arms—and stood spell-bound, as I caught sight of the cathedral towers, standing out in grand repose against the horizontal fiery bars of sunset, like great angels

at the gates of Paradise, watching in stately sorrow all the wailing and the wrong below. And beneath, beneath—the well-known roofs—Lillian's home, and all its proud and happy memories! It was but a corner of a gable, a scrap of garden, that I could see beyond intervening roofs and trees—but could I mistake them? There was the very cedar-tree; I knew its dark pyramid but too well! There I had walked by her; there, just behind that envious group of chestnuts, she was now. The light was fading; it must be six o'clock; she must be in her room now, dressing herself for dinner, looking so beautiful! And as I gazed, and gazed, all the intervening objects became transparent and vanished before the intensity of my imagination. Were my poems in her room still? Perhaps she had thrown them away—the condemned rioter's poems! Was she thinking of me? Yes—with horror and contempt. Well, at least she was thinking of me. And she would understand me at last—she must. Some day she would know all I had borne for love of her—the depth, the might, the purity of my adoration. She would see the world honouring me, in the day of my triumph, when I was appreciated at last; when I stood before the eyes of admiring men, a people's singer, a king of human spirits, great with the rank which genius gives, then she would find out what a man had loved her: then she would know the honour, the privilege of a poet's worship.

——But that trial scene.

Ay—that trial scene. That cold unmoved smile!—when she knew me, must have known me, not to be the wretch which those hired slanderers had called me. If she had cared for me—if she had a woman's heart in her at all, any pity, any justice, would she not have spoken? Would she not have called on others to speak, and clear me of the calumny? Nonsense! Impossible! She—so frail, tender, retiring—how could she speak? How did I know that she had not felt for me? It was woman's nature—duty, to conceal her feelings; perhaps that after all was the true explanation of that smile. Perhaps, too, she might have spoken—might be even now pleading for me in secret; not that I wished to be pardoned—not I—but it would be so

delicious to have her, her, pleading for me! Perhaps—perhaps I might hear of her—from her! Surely she could not leave me here so close, without some token! And I actually listened, I know not how long, expecting the door to open, and a message to arrive; till, with my eyes riveted on that bit of gable, and my ears listening behind me like a hare's in her form, to catch every sound in the ward outside, I fell fast asleep, and forgot all in the heavy dreamless torpor of utter mental and bodily exhaustion.

I was awakened by the opening of my cell door and the appearance of the turnkey.

"Well, young man, all right again? You've had a long nap; and no wonder, you've had a hard time of it lately; and a good lesson to you, too."

"How long have I slept? I do not recollect going to bed. And how came I to lie down without undressing?"

"I found you, at lock-up hours, asleep there kneeling on the chair, with your head on the window-sill; and a mercy you hadn't tumbled off and broke your back. Now, look here.—You seems a civil sort of chap; and civil gets as civil gives with me. Only don't you talk no politics. They ain't no good to nobody, except the big 'uns, wot gets their living thereby; and I should think you 'd had dose enough on 'em to last for a month of Sundays. So just get yourself tidy, there's a lad, and come along with me to chapel."

I obeyed him, in that and other things; and I never received from him, or, indeed, from any one else there, aught but kindness. I have no complaint to make—but prison is prison. As for talking politics, I never, during those three years, exchanged as many sentences with any of my fellow-prisoners. What had I to say to them? Poachers and petty thieves—the scum of misery, ignorance, and rascality throughout the country. If my heart yearned toward them at times, it was generally shut close by the exclusive pride of superior intellect and knowledge. I considered it, as it was, a degradation to be classed with such; never asking myself how far I had brought that degradation on myself; and I loved to show my sense of injustice by walking, moody and silent, up and down a lonely corner of the yard;

and at last contrived, under the plea of ill health (and, truly, I never was ten minutes without coughing), to confine myself entirely to my cell, and escape altogether the company of a class whom I despised, almost hated, as my betrayers, before whom I had cast away my pearls—questionable though they were according to Mackaye. Oh! there is in the intellectual workman's heart, as in all others, the root of Pharisaism—the lust after self-glorifying superiority, on the ground of "genius." We too are men; frail, selfish, proud as others. The days are past, thank God, when the "gentlemen button-makers," used to insist on a separate tap-room from the mere "button-makers," on the ground of earning a few more shillings per week. But we are not yet thorough democrats, my brothers; we do not yet utterly believe our own loud doctrine of equality; nor shall we till ——But I must not anticipate the stages of my own experience.

* * * * *

I complain of no one, again I say—neither of judge, jury, gaolers, or chaplain. True, imprisonment was the worst possible remedy for my disease that could have been devised, if, as the new doctrine is, punishments are inflicted only to reform the criminal. What could prison do for me, but embitter and confirm all my prejudices? But I do not see what else they could have done with me while law is what it is, and perhaps ever will be; dealing with the overt acts of the poor, and never touching the subtler and more spiritual iniquities of the rich respectable. When shall we see a nation ruled, not by the law, by the Gospel; not in the letter which kills, but in the spirit which is love, forgiveness, life? When? God knows! And God does know.

* * * * *

But I did work, during those three years, for months at a time, steadily and severely; and with little profit, alas! to my temper of mind. I gorged my intellect, for I could do nothing else. The political questions which I longed to solve in some way or other, were tabooed by the well-meaning chaplain. He even forbid me a standard English work on political economy, which I had written to Mackaye

to borrow for me; he was not so careful, it will be seen hereafter, with foreign books. He meant, of course, to keep my mind from what he considered at once useless and polluting; but the only effect of his method was, that all the doubts and questions remained, rankling and fierce, imperiously demanding my attention, and had to be solved by my own moody and soured meditations, warped and coloured by the strong sense of universal wrong.

Then he deluged me with tracts, weak and well-meaning, which informed me that "Christians," being "not of this world," had nothing to do with politics; and preached to me the divine right of kings, passive obedience to the powers—or impotences—that be, &c., &c., with such success as may be imagined. I opened them each, read a few sentences, and laid them by. "They were written by good men, no doubt; but men who had an interest in keeping up the present system;" at all events by men who knew nothing of my temptations, my creed, my unbelief; who saw all heaven and earth from a station antipodal to my own; I had simply nothing to do with them.

And yet, excellent man! pious, benignant, compassionate! God forbid that I should, in writing these words, allow myself a desire so base as that of disparaging thee! However thy words failed of their purpose, that bright, gentle, earnest face never appeared without bringing balm to the wounded spirit. Hadst thou not recalled me to humanity, those three years would have made a savage and madman of me. May God reward thee hereafter! Thou hast thy reward on earth in the gratitude of many a broken heart bound up, of drunkards sobered, thieves reclaimed, and outcasts taught to look for a paternal home denied them here on earth! While such thy deeds, what matter thine opinions?

But alas! (for the truth must be told, as a warning to those who have to face the educated working men,) his opinions did matter to himself. The good man laboured under the delusion, common enough, of choosing his favourite weapons from his weakest faculty; and the very inferiority of his intellect prevented him from seeing where his true strength lay. He *would* argue; he would try and

convert me from scepticism by what seemed to him reasoning, the common figure of which was, what logicians, I believe, call begging the question; and the common method, what they call *ignoratio elenchi*—shooting at pigeons, while crows are the game desired. He always started by demanding my assent to the very question which lay at the bottom of my doubts. He would wrangle and wrestle blindly up and down, with tears of earnestness in his eyes, till he had lost his temper, as far as it was possible for one so angel-guarded as he seemed to be; and then, when he found himself confused, contradicting his own words, making concessions at which he shuddered, for the sake of gaining from me assents which he found out the next moment I understood in quite a different sense from his, he would suddenly shift his ground, and try to knock me down authoritatively with a single text of Scripture; when all the while I wanted proof that Scripture had any authority at all.

He carefully confined himself, too, throughout, to the dogmatic phraseology of the pulpit; while I either did not understand, or required justification for, the strange, far-fetched, technical meanings, which he attached to his expressions. If he would only have talked English!—if clergymen would only preach in English!—and then they wonder that their sermons have no effect! Their notion seems to be, as my good chaplain's was, that the teacher is not to condescend to the scholar, much less to become all things to all men, if by any means he may save some; but that he has a right to demand that the scholar shall ascend to him before he is taught; that he shall raise himself up of his own strength into the teacher's region of thought as well as feeling; to do for himself, in short, under penalty of being called an unbeliever, just what the preacher professes to do for him.

At last, he seemed dimly to discover that I could not acquiesce in his conclusions, while I denied his premises; and so he lent me, in an ill-starred moment, "Paley's Evidences," and some tracts of the last generation against Deism. I read them, and remained, as hundreds more have done, just where I was before.

"Was Paley," I asked, "a really good and pious man?"

The really good and pious man hemmed and hawed.

"Because, if he was not, I can't trust a page of his special pleading, let it look as clever as the whole Old Bailey in one."

Besides, I never denied the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, or his apostles. I doubted the myths and doctrines, which I believed to have been gradually built up round the true story. The fact was, he was, like most of his class, "attacking extinct Satans," fighting manfully against Voltaire, Volney, and Tom Paine; while I was fighting for Strauss, Hennell, and Emerson. And, at last, he gave me up for some weeks as a hopeless infidel, without ever having touched the points on which I disbelieved. He had never read Strauss—hardly even heard of him; and, till clergymen make up their minds to do that, and to answer Strauss also, they will, as he did, leave the heretic artisan just where they found him.

The bad effect which all this had on my mind may easily be conceived. I felt myself his intellectual superior. I tripped him up, played with him, made him expose his weaknesses, till I really began to despise him. May Heaven forgive me for it! But it was not till long afterwards that I began, on looking back, to see how worthless was any superior cleverness of mine before his superior moral and spiritual excellence. That was just what he would not let me see at the time. I was worshipping intellect, mere intellect; and thence arose my doubts; and he tried to conquer them by exciting the very faculty which had begotten them. When will the clergy learn that their strength is in action, and not in argument? If they are to reconvert the masses, it must be by noble deeds, as Carlyle says; "not by noisy theoretic laudation of *a* Church, but by silent practical demonstration of *the* Church."

* * * * *

But, the reader may ask, where was your Bible all this time?

Yes—there was a Bible in my cell—and the chaplain read to me, both privately and in chapel, such portions of

it as he thought suited my case, or rather his utterly-mistaken view thereof. But, to tell the truth, I cared not to read or listen. Was it not the book of the aristocrats —of kings and priests, passive obedience, and the slavery of the intellect? Had I been thrown under the influence of the more educated Independents in former years, I might have thought differently. They, at least, have contrived, with what logical consistence I know not, to reconcile orthodox Christianity with unflinching democratic opinions. But such was not my lot. My mother, as I said in my first chapter, had become a Baptist; because she believed that sect, and as I think rightly, to be the only one which logically and consistently carries out the Calvinistic theory; and now I looked back upon her delight in Gideon and Barak, Samson and Jehu, only as the mystic application of rare exceptions to the fanaticism of a chosen few—the elect—the saints, who, as the fifth-monarchy men held, were one day to rule the world with a rod of iron. And so I fell—willingly, alas!—into the vulgar belief about the politics of Scripture, common alike—strange unanimity!—to Infidel and Churchman. The great idea that the Bible is the history of mankind's deliverance from all tyranny, outward as well as inward; of the Jews, as the one free constitutional people among a world of slaves and tyrants; of their ruin, as the righteous fruit of a voluntary return to despotism; of the New Testament, as the good news that freedom, brotherhood, and equality, once confided only to Judæa and to Greece, and dimly seen even there, was henceforth to be the right of all mankind, the law of all society—who was there to tell me that? Who is there now to go forth and tell it to the millions who have suffered, and doubted, and despaired like me, and turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come? Again I ask—who will go forth and preach that Gospel, and save his native land?

But, as I said before, I read, and steadily. In the first place, I, for the first time in my life, studied Shakspeare throughout; and found out now the treasure which I had overlooked. I assure my readers I am not going to give

a lecture on him here, as I was minded to have done. Only, as I am asking questions, who will write us a "People's Commentary on Shakspeare"?

Then I waded, making copious notes and extracts, through the whole of Hume, and Hallam's "Middle Ages," and "Constitutional History," and found them barren to my soul. When (to ask a third and last question) will some man, of the spirit of Carlyle—one who is not ashamed to acknowledge the intervention of a God, a Providence, even of a devil, in the affairs of men—arise, and write a "People's History of England"?

Then I laboured long months at learning French, for the mere purpose of reading French political economy after my liberation. But at last, in my impatience, I wrote to Sandy to send me Proudhon and Louis Blanc, on the chance of their passing the good chaplain's censorship—and behold, they passed! He had never heard their names! He was, I suspect, utterly ignorant of French, and afraid of exposing his ignorance by venturing to criticise. As it was, I was allowed peaceable possession of them till within a few months of my liberation, with such consequences as may be imagined: and then, to his unfeigned terror and horror, he discovered, in some periodical, that he had been leaving in my hands books which advocated "the destruction of property," and therefore, in his eyes, of all which is moral or sacred in earth or heaven! I gave them up without a struggle, so really painful was the good soul's concern and the reproaches which he heaped, not on me—he never reproached me in his life—but on himself, for having so neglected his duty.

Then I read hard for a few months at physical science—at Zoology and Botany, and threw it aside again in bitterness of heart. It was too bitter to be tantalized with the description of Nature's wondrous forms, and I there a prisoner between those four white walls.

Then I set to work to write an autobiography—at least to commit to paper in regular order the most striking incidents and conversations which I could recollect, and which I had noted down as they occurred in my diary. From that source I have drawn nearly the whole of my

history up to this point. For the rest I must trust to memory—and, indeed, the strange deeds and sufferings, and yet stranger revelations, of the last few months, have branded themselves deep enough upon my brain. I need not hope, or fear, that aught of them should slip my memory.

* * * * *

So went the weary time. Week after week, month after month, summer after summer, I scored the days off, like a lonely school boy, on the pages of a calendar; and day by day I went to my window, and knelt there, gazing at the gable and the cedar-tree. That was my only recreation. Sometimes, at first, my eyes used to wander over the wide prospect of rich lowlands, and farms, and hamlets, and I used to amuse myself with conjectures about the people who lived in them, and walked where they liked on God's earth: but soon I hated to look at the country; its perpetual change and progress mocked the dreary sameness of my dungeon. It was bitter, maddening, to see the grey boughs grow green with leaves, and the green fade to autumnal yellow, and the grey boughs reappear again, and I still there! The dark sleeping fallows bloomed with emerald blades of corn, and then the corn grew deep and crisp, and blackened before the summer breeze, in "waves of shadow," as Mr. Tennyson says in one of his most exquisite lyrics; and then the fields grew white to harvest day by day, and I saw the rows of sheaves rise one by one, and the carts crawling homeward under their load. I could almost hear the merry voices of the children round them—children that could go into the woods, and pick wild flowers, and I still there! No—I would look at nothing but the gable and the cedar-tree, and the tall cathedral towers; there was no change in them—they did not laugh at me.

But she who lived beneath them? Months and seasons crawled along, and yet no sign or hint of her! I was forgotten, forsaken! And yet I gazed, and gazed. I could not forget her; I could not forget what she had been to me. Eden was still there, though I was shut out from it for ever: and so, like a widower over the grave of her he

loves, morning and evening I watched the gable and the cedar-tree.

And my cousin? Ah, that was the thought, the only thought, which made my life intolerable! What might he not be doing in the meantime? I knew his purpose, I knew his power. True, I had never seen a hint, a glance, which could have given him hope; but he had three whole years to win her in—three whole years, and I fettered, helpless, absent! "Fool! could I have won her if I had been free? At least, I would have tried: we would have fought it fairly out, on even ground; we would have seen which was the strongest, respectability and cunning, or the simplicity of genius. But now!"—And I tore at the bars of the window, and threw myself on the floor of my cell, and longed to die.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE NEW CHURCH.

In a poor suburb of the city, which I could see well enough from my little window, a new Gothic church was building. When I first took up my abode in the cell, it was just begun—the walls had hardly risen above the neighbouring sheds and garden-fences. But month after month I had watched it growing; I had seen one window after another filled with tracery, one buttress after another finished off with its carved pinnacle; then I had watched the skeleton of the roof gradually clothed in tiling; and then the glazing of the windows—some of them painted, I could see, from the iron network which was placed outside them the same day. Then the doors were put up—were they going to finish that handsome tower? No: it was left with its wooden cap, I suppose for further funds. But the nave, and the deep chancel behind it, were all finished, and surmounted by a cross,—and beautifully enough the little sanctuary looked, in the virgin-purity of its spotless free-stone. For eighteen months I watched it grow before my eyes—and I was still in my cell!

And then there was a grand procession of surplices and lawn sleeves; and among them I fancied I distinguished the old dean's stately figure, and turned my head away, and looked again, and fancied I distinguished another figure—it must have been mere imagination—the distance was far too great for me to identify any one; but I could not get out of my head the fancy—say rather, the instinct—that it was my cousin's; and that it was my cousin whom I saw daily after that, coming out and going in—when the bell

rang to morning and evening prayers—for there were daily services there, and saint's day services, and Lent services, and three services on a Sunday, and six or seven on Good Friday and Easter-day. The little musical bell above the chancel-arch seemed always ringing: and still that figure haunted me like a nightmare, ever coming in and going out about its priestly calling—and I still in my cell! If it should be he!—so close to her! I shuddered at the thought; and, just because it was so intolerable, it clung to me, and tormented me, and kept me awake at nights, till I became utterly unable to study quietly, and spent hours at the narrow window, watching for the very figure I loathed to see.

And then a Gothic school-house rose at the churchyard end, and troops of children poured in and out, and women came daily for alms; and when the frosts came on, every morning I saw a crowd, and soup carried away in pitchers, and clothes and blankets given away; the giving seemed endless, boundless; and I thought of the times of the Roman Empire and the "sportula," when the poor had got to live upon the alms of the rich, more and more, year by year—till they devoured their own devourers, and the end came; and I shuddered. And yet it was a pleasant sight, as every new church is to the healthy-minded man, let his religious opinions be what they may. A fresh centre of civilization, mercy, comfort for weary hearts, relief from frost and hunger; a fresh centre of instruction, humanizing, disciplining, however meagre in my eyes, to hundreds of little savage spirits; altogether a pleasant sight, even to me there in my cell. And I used to wonder at the wasted power of the Church—her almost entire monopoly of the pulpits, the schools, the alms of England; and then thank Heaven, somewhat prematurely, that she knew and used so little her vast latent power for the destruction of liberty.

Or for its realization?

Ay, that is the question! We shall not see it solved—at least, I never shall.

But still that figure haunted me; all through that winter I saw it, chatting with old women, patting children's

heads, walking to the church with ladies; sometimes with a tiny, tripping figure.—I did not dare to let myself fancy who that might be.

* * * * *

December passed, and January came. I had now only two months more before my deliverance. One day I seemed to myself to have passed a whole life in that narrow room; and the next, the years and months seemed short and blank as a night's sleep on waking; and there was no salient point in all my memory, since that last sight of Lillian's smile, and the faces and the window whirling round me as I fell.

At last a letter came from Mackaye. "Ye speired for news o' your cousin—an' I find he's a neebour o' yours; ca'd to a new kirk i' the city o' your captivity—an' na stickit minister he makes, forbye he's ane o' these new Puseyite sectarians, to judge by your uncle's report. I met the auld bailie-bodie on the street, and was gaun to pass him by, but he was sae fou o' good news he could na but stop an' ha' a crack wi' me on politics; for we ha' helpit thegither in certain municipal clamjamfries o' late. An' he told me your cousin wins honour fast, an' maun surely die a bishop—puir bairn! An' besides that he's gaun to be married the spring. I dinna mind the leddy's name; but there's tocher wi' lass o' his I'll warrant. He's na laird o' Cockpen, for a penniless lass wi' a long pedigree."

As I sat meditating over this news—which made the torment of suspicion and suspense more intolerable than ever—behold a postscript added some two days after.

"Oh! Oh! Sic news! gran news! news to make baith the ears o' him that heareth it to tingle. God is God, an' no the deevil after a'! Louis Philippe is doun!—doun, doun, like a dog, and the republic's proclaimed, an' the auld villain here in England, they say, a wanderer an' a beggar. I ha' sent ye the paper o' the day. Ps.—73, 37, 12. Oh, the Psalms are full o't! Never say the Bible's no true, mair. I've been unco faithless mysel', God forgive me! I got grieving to see the wicked in sic prosperity. I did na gang into the sanctuary eneugh, an' therefore I could na see the end of these men—how He does take them up

suddenly after all, an' cast them doun: vanish they do, perish, an' come to a fearful end. Yea, like as a dream when one awaketh, so shalt thou make their image to vanish out of the city. Oh, but it's a day o' God! An' yet I'm sair afraid for they puir feckless French. I ha' na faith, ye ken, in the Celtic blude, an' its spirit o' lees. The Saxon spirit o' covetize is a grewsome house-fiend, and sae's our Norse speerit o' shifts an' dodges; but the spirit o' lees is warse. Puir lustful Reubens that they are!—unstable as water, they shall not excel. Well, well—after all, there is a God that judgeth the earth; an' when a man kens that, he's learnt eneugh to last him till he dies."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE TOWER OF BABEL.

A glorious people vibrated again
The lightning of the nations; Liberty
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er France,
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay;
And in the rapid plumes of song
Clothed itself sublime and strong.

SUBLIME and strong? Alas! not so. An outcast, heartless, faithless, and embittered, I went forth from my prison.—But yet Louis Philippe had fallen! And as I whirled back to Babylon and want, discontent and discord, my heart was light, my breath came thick and fierce.—The incubus of France had fallen! and from land to land, like the Beacon-fire which leaped from peak to peak proclaiming Troy's downfall, passed on the glare of burning idols, the crash of falling anarchies. Was I mad, sinful? Both—and yet neither. Was I mad and sinful, if on my return to my old haunts, amid the grasp of loving hands and the caresses of those who called me in their honest flattery a martyr and a hero—what things, as Carlyle says, men will fall down and worship in their extreme need!—was I mad and sinful, if daring hopes arose, and desperate words were spoken, and wild eyes read in wild eyes the thoughts they dare not utter? "Liberty has risen from the dead, and we too will be free!"

Yes, mad and sinful; therefore are we as we are. Yet

God has forgiven us—perhaps so have those men whose forgiveness is alone worth having.

Liberty? And is that word a dream, a lie, the watch-word only of rebellious fiends, as bigots say even now? Our forefathers spoke not so—

> The shadow of her coming fell
> On Saxon Alfred's olive-tinctured brow.

Had not freedom, progressive, expanding, descending, been the glory and the strength of England? Were Magna Charta and the Habeas Corpus Act, Hampden's resistance to ship-money, and the calm, righteous might of 1688—were they all futilities and fallacies? Ever downwards, for seven hundred years, welling from the heaven-watered mountain peaks of wisdom, had spread the stream of liberty. The nobles had gained their charter from John; the middle classes from William of Orange: was not the time at hand, when from a queen, more gentle, charitable, upright, spotless, than had ever sat on the throne of England, the working masses in their turn should gain their Charter?

If it was given, the gift was hers: if it was demanded to the uttermost, the demand would be made, not on her, but on those into whose hands her power had passed, the avowed representatives neither of the Crown nor of the people, but of the very commercial class which was devouring us.

Such was our dream. Insane and wicked were the passions which accompanied it; insane and wicked were the means we chose; and God in his mercy to us, rather than to Mammon, triumphant in his iniquity, fattening his heart even now for a spiritual day of slaughter more fearful than any physical slaughter which we in our folly had prepared for him—God frustrated them.

We confess our sins. Shall the Chartist alone be excluded from the promise, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness"?

And yet, were there no excuses for us? I do not say for myself—and yet three years of prison might be some

excuse for a soured and harshened spirit—but I will not avail myself of the excuse; for there were men, stancher Chartists than ever I had been—men who had suffered not only imprisonment, but loss of health and loss of fortune; men whose influence with the workmen was far wider than my own, and whose temptations were therefore all the greater, who manfully and righteously kept themselves aloof from all those frantic schemes, and now reap their reward, in being acknowledged as the true leaders of the artizans, while the mere preachers of sedition are scattered to the winds.

But were there no excuses for the mass? Was there no excuse in the spirit with which the English upper classes regarded the continental revolutions? No excuse in the undisguised dislike, fear, contempt, which they expressed for that very sacred name of Liberty, which had been for ages the pride of England and her laws—

> The old laws of England, they
> Whose reverend heads with age are grey—
> Children of a wiser day—
> And whose solemn voice must be
> Thine own echo, Liberty!

for which, according to the latest improvements, is now substituted a bureaucracy of despotic commissions? Shame upon those who sneered at the very name of her to whom they owed the wealth they idolize! who cry down liberty because God has given it to them in such priceless abundance, boundless as the sunshine and the air of heaven, that they are become unconscious of it as of the elements by which they live! Woe to those who despise the gift of God! Woe to those who have turned His grace into a cloak for tyranny; who, like the Jews of old, have trampled under foot His covenant at the very moment that they were asserting their exclusive right to it, and denying his all-embracing love!

And were there no excuses, too, in the very arguments which nineteen-twentieths of the public press used to deter us from following the example of the Continent? If there had been one word of sympathy with the deep wrongs of France, Germany, Italy, Hungary—one attempt

to discriminate the righteous and God-inspired desire of freedom, from man's furious and self-willed perversion of it, we would have listened to them. But, instead, what was the first, last, cardinal, crowning argument?—"The cost of sedition!" "Revolutions interfered with trade!" and therefore they were damnable! Interfere with the food and labour of the millions? The millions would take the responsibility of that upon themselves. If the party of order cares so much for the millions, why had they left them what they are? No: it was with the profits of the few that revolutions interfered; with the Divine right, not so much of kings, but of money-making. They hampered Mammon, the very fiend who is devouring the masses. The one end and aim of existence was, the maintenance of order—of peace and room to make money in. And therefore Louis' spies might make France one great inquisition-hell; German princelets might sell their country piecemeal to French or Russian! the Hungarian constitution, almost the counterpart of our own, might be sacrificed at the will of an idiot or villain; Papal misgovernment might continue to render Rome a worse den of thieves than even Papal superstition could have made it without the addition of tyranny; but Order must be maintained, for how else could the few make money out of the labour of the many? These were their own arguments. Whether they were likely to conciliate the workman to the powers that be, by informing him that those powers were avowedly the priests of the very system which was crushing him, let the reader judge.

The maintenance of order—of the order of disorder—that was to be the new God before whom the working classes were to bow in spell-bound awe; an idol more despicable and empty than even that old divine right of tyrants, newly applied by some well-meaning but illogical personages, not merely as of old to hereditary sovereigns, but to Louis Philippes, usurers, upstarts—why not hereafter to demagogues? Blindfold and desperate bigots! who would actually thus, in the imbecility of terror, deify that very right of the physically strongest and cunningest, which, if anything, is antichrist itself. That argument

against sedition, the workmen heard; and, recollecting 1688, went on their way, such as it was, unheeding.

One word more, even at the risk of offending many whom I should be very sorry to offend, and I leave this hateful discussion. Let it ever be remembered that the working classes considered themselves deceived, cajoled, by the passers of the Reform Bill; that they cherished —whether rightly or wrongly it is now too late to ask—a deep-rooted grudge against those who had, as they thought, made their hopes and passions a stepping-stone towards their own selfish ends. They were told to support the Reform Bill, not only on account of its intrinsic righteousness—which God forbid that I should deny—but because it was the first of a glorious line of steps towards their enfranchisement; and now the very men who told them this, talked peremptorily of "finality," showed themselves the most dogged and careless of conservatives, and pooh-poohed away every attempt at further enlargement of the suffrage. They were told to support it as the remedy for their own social miseries; and behold those miseries were year by year becoming deeper, more wide-spread, more hopeless; their entreaties for help and mercy, in 1842, and at other times, had been lazily laid by unanswered; and almost the only practical efforts for their deliverance had been made by a Tory nobleman, the honoured and beloved Lord Ashley. They found that they had, in helping to pass the Reform Bill, only helped to give power to the two very classes who crushed them—the great labour kings, and the small shopkeepers; that they had blindly armed their oppressors with the additional weapon of an ever-increasing political majority. They had been told, too (let that never be forgotten), that in order to carry the Reform Bill, sedition itself was lawful; they had seen the master-manufacturers themselves give the signal for the plug-riots by stopping their mills. Their vanity, ferocity, sense of latent and fettered power, pride of numbers, and physical strength, had been flattered and pampered by those who now only talked of grape-shot and bayonets. They had heard the Reform Bill carried by the threats of men of rank and power, that "Manchester should march upon London."

Were their masters, then, to have a monopoly in sedition, as in everything else? What had been fair in order to compel the Reform Bill, must surely be fairer still to compel the fulfilment of Reform Bill pledges? And so, imitating the example of those whom they fancied had first used and then deserted them, they, in their madness, concocted a rebellion, not primarily against the laws and constitution of their land, but against Mammon—against that accursed system of competition, slavery of labour, absorption of the small capitalists by the large ones, and of the workman by all, which is, and was, and ever will be, their internecine foe. Silly and sanguinary enough were their schemes, God knows! and bootless enough had they succeeded; for nothing flourishes in the revolutionary atmosphere but that lowest embodiment of Mammon, "the black pool of Agio," and its money-gamblers. But the battle remains still to be fought; the struggle is internecine; only no more with weapons of flesh and blood, but with a mightier weapon—with that association which is the true bane of Mammon—the embodiment of brotherhood and love.

We should have known that before the tenth of April? Most true, reader—but wrath is blindness. You too surely have read more wisdom than you have practised yet; seeing that you have your Bible, and perhaps, too, Mill's "Political Economy." Have you perused therein the priceless Chapter "On the Probable Futurity of the Labouring Classes"? If not, let me give you the reference —vol. ii, p. 315, of the Second Edition. Read it, thou self-satisfied Mammon, and perpend; for it is both a prophecy and a doom!

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But, the reader may ask, how did you, with your experience of the reason, honesty, moderation, to be expected of mobs, join in a plan which, if it had succeeded, must have let loose on those "who had" in London, the whole flood of those "who had not"?

The reader shall hear. My story may be instructive, as a type of the feelings of thousands beside me.

It was the night after I had returned from D * * * *; sitting in Crossthwaite's little room, I had heard with

mingled anxiety and delight the plans of my friends. They were about to present a monster petition in favour of the Charter; to accompany it *en masse* to the door of the House of Commons; and if it was refused admittance —why, then, ulterior measures were the only hope. "And they will refuse it," said Crossthwaite; "they're going, I hear, to revive some old law or other, that forbids processions within such and such a distance of the House of Commons. Let them forbid! To carry arms, to go in public procession, to present petitions openly, instead of having them made a humbug of by being laid on the table unopened by some careless member—they're our rights, and we'll have them. There's no use mincing the matter: it's just like the old fable of the farmer and his wheat—if we want it reaped, we must reap it ourselves. Public opinion, and the pressure from without, are the only things which have carried any measure in England for the last twenty years. Neither Whigs nor Tories deny it: the governed govern their governors—that's the 'ordre du jour' just now—and we'll have our turn at it! We'll give those House of Commons oligarchs —those tools of the squires and shopkeepers—we'll give them a taste of pleasure from without, as shall make the bar of the house crack again. And then to be under arms, day and night, till the Charter's granted."

"And if it is refused?"

"Fight! that's the word, and no other. There's no other hope. No Charter,—No social reforms! We must give them ourselves, for no one else will. Look there, and judge for yourself!"

He pulled a letter out from among his papers, and threw it across to me.

"What's this?"

"That came while you were in gaol. There don't want many words about it. We sent up a memorial to government about the army and police clothing. We told 'em how it was the lowest, most tyrannous, most ill-paid of all the branches of slop-making; how men took to it only when they were starved out of everything else. We entreated them to have mercy on us—entreated them to

interfere between the merciless contractors and the poor wretches on whose flesh and blood contractors, sweaters, and colonels, were all fattening: and there's the answer we got. Look at it; read it! Again and again I've been minded to placard it on the walls, that all the world might see the might and the mercies of the government. Read it! 'Sorry to say that it is utterly out of the power of her Majesty's * * * *s to interfere—as the question of wages rests entirely between the contractor and the workmen.'"

"He lies!" I said. "If it did, the workmen might put a pistol to the contractor's head, and say—'You shall not tempt the poor, needy, greedy, starving workers to their own destruction, and the destruction of their class; you shall not offer these murderous, poisonous prices. If we saw you offering our neighbour a glass of laudanum, we would stop you at all risks—and we will stop you now.' No! no! John, the question don't lie between workman and contractor, but between workman and contractor-plus-grape-and-bayonets!"

"Look again. There's worse comes after that. 'If government did interfere, it would not benefit the workman, as his rate of wages depends entirely on the amount of competition between the workmen themselves.' Yes, my dear children, you must eat each other; we are far too fond parents to interfere with so delightful an amusement! Curse them—sleek, hard-hearted, impotent do-nothings! They confess themselves powerless against competition—powerless against the very devil that is destroying us, faster and faster every year! They can't help us on a single point. They can't check population; and if they could, they can't get rid of the population which exists. They daren't give us a comprehensive emigration scheme. They daren't lift a finger to prevent gluts in the labour market. They daren't interfere between slave and slave, between slave and tyrant. They are cowards, and like cowards they shall fall!"

"Ay—like cowards they shall fall!" I answered; and from that moment I was a rebel and a conspirator.

"And will the country join us?"

"The cities will; never mind the country. They are too weak to resist their own tyrants—and they are too weak to resist us. The country's always drivelling in the background. A country-party's sure to be a party of imbecile bigots. Nobody minds them."

I laughed. "It always was so, John. When Christianity first spread, it was in the cities—till a pagan, a villager, got to mean a heathen for ever and ever."

"And so it was in the French revolution; when Popery had died out of all the rest of France, the priests and the aristocrats still found their dupes in the remote provinces."

"The sign of a dying system that, to be sure. Woe to Toryism and the Church of England, and everything else, when it gets to boasting that its stronghold is still the hearts of the agricultural poor. It is the cities, John, the cities, where the light dawns first—where man meets man, and spirit quickens spirit, and intercourse breeds knowledge, and knowledge sympathy, and sympathy enthusiasm, combination, power irresistible; while the agriculturists remain ignorant, selfish, weak, because they are isolated from each other. Let the country go. The towns shall win the Charter for England! And then for social reform, sanitary reform, ædile reform, cheap food, interchange of free labour, liberty, equality, and brotherhood for ever!"

Such was our Babel-tower, whose top should reach to heaven. To understand the allurement of that dream, you must have lain, like us, for years in darkness and the pit. You must have struggled for bread, for lodging, for cleanliness, for water, for education—all that makes life worth living for—and found them becoming, year by year, more hopelessly impossible, if not to yourself, yet still to the millions less gifted than yourself; you must have sat in darkness and the shadow of death, till you are ready to welcome any ray of light, even though it should be the glare of a volcano.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A PATRIOT'S REWARD.

I NEVER shall forget one evening's walk, as Crossthwaite and I strode back together from the Convention. We had walked on some way arm in arm in silence, under the crushing and embittering sense of having something to conceal—something, which if those who passed us so carelessly in the street had known——! It makes a villain and a savage of a man, that consciousness of a dark, hateful secret. And it was a hateful one!—a dark and desperate necessity, which we tried to call by noble names, that faltered on our lips as we pronounced them; for the spirit of God was not in us; and instead of bright hope, and the clear fixed lodestar of duty, weltered in our imaginations a wild possible future of tumult, and flame, and blood.

"It must be done!—it shall be done!—it will be done!" burst out John, at last, in that positive, excited tone, which indicated a half disbelief of his own words. "I've been reading Macerone on street-warfare; and I see the way as clear as day."

I felt nothing but the dogged determination of despair. "It must be tried, if the worst comes to the worst—but I have no hope. I read Somerville's answer to that Colonel Macerone. Ten years ago he showed it was impossible. We cannot stand against artillery; we have no arms."

"I'll tell you where to buy plenty. There's a man, Power, or Bower, he's sold hundreds in the last few days; and he understands the matter. He tells us we're certain,

safe. There are hundreds of young men in the government offices ready to join, if we do but succeed at first. It all depends on that. The first hour settles the fate of a revolution."

"If we succeed, yes—the cowardly world will always side with the conquering party; and we shall have every pickpocket and ruffian in our wake, plundering in the name of liberty and order."

"Then we'll shoot them like dogs, as the French did! 'Mort aux voleurs' shall be the word!"

"Unless they shoot us. The French had a national guard, who had property to lose, and took care of it. The shopkeepers here will be all against us; they'll all be sworn in special constables, to a man; and between them and the soldiers, we shall have three to one upon us."

"Oh! that Power assures me the soldiers will fraternize. He says there are three regiments at least have promised solemnly to shoot their officers, and give up their arms to the mob."

"Very important, if true—and very scoundrelly, too. I'd sooner be shot myself by fair fighting, than see officers shot by cowardly treason."

"Well, it's ugly. I like fair play as well as any man. But it can't be done. There must be a surprise, a *coup de main*, as the French say" (poor Crossthwaite was always quoting French in those days). "Once show our strength—burst upon the tyrants like a thunderclap; and then!—

> "Men of England, heirs of glory,
> Heroes of unwritten story,
> Rise, shake off the chains like dew
> Which in sleep have fallen on you!
> Ye are many, they are few!"

"That's just what I am afraid they are not. Let's go and find out this man Power, and hear his authority for the soldier-story. Who knows him?"

"Why, Mike Kelly and he had been a deal together of late, Kelly's a true heart now—a true Irishman ready for anything. Those Irish are the boys, after all—though I don't deny they do bluster and have their way a little too much in the Convention. But still Ireland's wrongs are

England's. We have the same oppressors. We must make common cause against the tyrants."

"I wish to Heaven they would just have stayed at home, and ranted on the other side of the water; they had their own way there, and no Mammonite middle-class to keep them down; and yet they never did an atom of good. Their eloquence is all bombast, and what's more, Crossthwaite, though there are some fine fellows among them, nine-tenths are liars—liars in grain, and you know it——"

Crossthwaite turned angrily to me. "Why, you are getting as reactionary as old Mackaye himself!"

"I am not—and he is not. I am ready to die on a barricade to-morrow, if it comes to that. I haven't six months' lease of life—I am going into consumption; and a bullet is as easy a death as spitting up my lungs piecemeal. But I despise these Irish, because I can't trust them—they can't trust each other—they can't trust themselves. You know as well as I that you can't get common justice done in Ireland, because you can depend upon no man's oath. You know as well as I, that in Parliament or out, nine out of ten of them will stick at no lie, even if it has been exposed and refuted fifty times over, provided it serves the purpose of the moment; and I often think that, after all, Mackaye's right, and what's the matter with Ireland is just that and nothing else—that from the nobleman in his castle to the beggar on his dunghill, they are a nation of liars, John Crossthwaite!"

"Sandy's a prejudiced old Scotchman."

"Sandy's a wiser man than you or I, and you know it."

"Oh, I don't deny that; but he's getting old, and I think he has been failing in his mind of late."

"I'm afraid he's failing in his health; he has never been the same man since they hooted him down in John Street. But he hasn't altered in his opinions one jot; and I'll tell you what—I believe he's right. I'll die in this matter like a man, because it's the cause of liberty; but I've fearful misgivings about it, just because Irishmen are at the head of it."

"Of course they are—they have the deepest wrongs;

and that makes them most earnest in the cause of right. The sympathy of suffering, as they say themselves, has bound them to the English working man against the same oppressors."

"Then let them fight those oppressors at home, and we'll do the same: that's the true way to show sympathy. Charity begins at home. They are always crying 'Ireland for the Irish'; why can't they leave England for the English?"

"You're envious of O'Connor's power!"

"Say that again, John Crossthwaite, and we part for ever!" And I threw off his arm indignantly.

"No—but—don't let's quarrel, my dear old fellow—now, that perhaps, perhaps we may never meet again—but I can't bear to hear the Irish abused. They're noble, enthusiastic, generous fellows. If we English had half as warm hearts, we shouldn't be as we are now; and O'Connor's a glorious man, I tell you. Just think of him, the descendant of the ancient kings, throwing away his rank, his name, all he had in the world, for the cause of the suffering millions!"

"That's a most aristocratic speech, John," said I, smiling, in spite of my gloom. "So you keep a leader because he's descended from ancient kings, do you? I should prefer him just because he was not—just because he was a working man, and come of workmen's blood. We shall see whether he's stanch after all. To my mind, little Cuffy's worth a great deal more, as far as earnestness goes."

"Oh! Cuffy's a low-bred, uneducated fellow."

"Aristocrat again, John!" said I, as we went up-stairs to Kelly's room. And Crossthwaite did not answer.

There was so great a hubbub inside Kelly's room, of English, French, and Irish, all talking at once, that we knocked at intervals for full five minutes, unheard by the noisy crew; and I, in despair, was trying the handle, which was fast, when, to my astonishment, a heavy blow was struck on the panel from the inside, and the point of a sharp instrument driven right through, close to my knees, with the exclamation—

"What do you think o' that, now, in a policeman's bread-basket?"

"I think," answered I, as loud as I dare, and as near the dangerous door, "if I intended really to use it, I wouldn't make such a fool's noise about it."

There was a dead silence; the door was hastily opened, and Kelly's nose poked out; while we, in spite of the horribleness of the whole thing, could not help laughing at his face of terror. Seeing who we were he welcomed us in at once, into a miserable apartment, full of pikes and daggers, brandished by some dozen miserable, ragged, half-starved artizans. Three-fourths, I saw at once, were slop-working tailors. There was a bloused and bearded Frenchman or two; but the majority were, as was to have been expected, the oppressed, the starved, the untaught, the despairing, the insane; "the dangerous classes," which society creates, and then shrinks in horror, like Frankenstein, from the monster her own clumsy ambition has created. Thou Frankenstein Mammon! hast thou not had warnings enough, either to make thy machines like men, or stop thy bungling, and let God make them for Himself?

I will not repeat what I heard there. There is many a frantic ruffian of that night now sitting "in his right mind"—though not yet "clothed"—waiting for God's deliverance, rather than his own.

We got Kelly out of the room into the street, and began inquiring of him the whereabouts of this said Bower or Power. "He didn't know,"—the feather-headed Irishman that he was!—"Faix, by-the-by, he'd forgotten—an' he went to look for him at the place he tould him, and they didn't know sich a one there——"

"Oh, oh! Mr. Power has an *alibi*, then? Perhaps an *alias* too?"

"He didn't know his name rightly. Some said it was Brown; but he was a broth of a boy—a thrue people's man. Bedad, he gov' away arms afthen and afthen to them that couldn't buy 'em. An' he's as free-spoken—och, but he's put me into the confidence! Come down the street a bit, and I'll tell yees—I'll be Lord-Lieutenant o' Dublin Castle meself, if it succades, as shure as there's

no snakes in ould Ireland, an' revenge her wrongs ankle deep in the bhlood o' the Saxon! Whirroo! for the marthyred memory o' the three hundred thousint vargens o' Wexford!"

"Hold your tongue, you ass!" said Crossthwaite, as he clapped his hand over his mouth, expecting every moment to find us all three in the Rhadamanthine grasp of a policeman; while I stood laughing, as people will, for mere disgust at the ridiculous, which almost always intermingles with the horrible.

At last, out it came——

"Bedad! we're going to do it! London's to be set o' fire in seventeen places at the same moment, an' I'm to light two of them to me own self, and make a holycrust —ay, that's the word—o' Ireland's scorpions, to sting themselves to death in circling flame——"

"You would not do such a villanous thing?" cried we, both at once.

"Bedad! but I won't harm a hair o' their heads! Shure, we'll save the women and childer alive, and run for the fire-ingins our blessed selves, and then out with the pikes, and seize the Bank and the Tower—

An' av' I lives, I lives victhorious,
An' av' I dies, my soul in glory is;
Love fa—a—are—well!"

I was getting desperate: the whole thing seemed at once so horrible and so impossible. There must be some villanous trap at the bottom of it.

"If you don't tell me more about this fellow Power, Mike," said I, "I'll blow your brains out on the spot: either you or he are villains." And I valiantly pulled out my only weapon, the door key, and put it to his head.

"Och! are you mad, thin? He's a broth of a boy; and I'll tell ye. Shure he knows all about the red-coats, case he's an arthillery man himself, and that's the way he's found out his gran' combustible."

"An artilleryman?" said John. "He told me he was a writer for the press."

"Bedad, thin, he's mistaken himself intirely; for he tould

me with his own mouth. And I'll show you the thing he sowld me as is to do it. Shure, it'll set fire to the stones o' the street, av' you pour a bit vitriol on it."

"Set fire to the stones? I must see that before I believe it."

"Shure an' ye shall then. Where'll I buy a bit? Sorra a shop is there open this time o' night; an' troth I forgot the name o' it intirely! Poker o' Moses, but here's a bit in my pocket!"

And out of his tattered coat-tail he lugged a flask of powder and a lump of some cheap chemical salt, whose name I have, I am ashamed to say, forgotten.

"You're a pretty fellow to keep such things in the same pocket with gunpowder!"

"Come along to Mackaye's," said Crossthwaite. "I'll see to the bottom of this. Be hanged, but I think the fellow's a cursed *mouchard*—some government spy!"

"Spy is he, thin? Och, the thief o' the world! I'll stab him! I'll murther him! an' burn the town afterwards, all the same."

"Unless," said I, "just as you've got your precious combustible to blaze off, up he comes from behind the corner and gives you in charge to a policeman. It's a villanous trap, you miserable fool, as sure as the moon's in heaven."

"Upon my word, I am afraid it is—and I'm trapped too."

"Blood and turf! thin, it's he that I'll trap, thin. There's two million free and inlightened Irishmen in London, to avenge my marthyrdom wi' pikes and baggonets like raving salviges, and blood for blood!"

"Like savages, indeed!" said I to Crossthwaite, "And pretty savage company we are keeping. Liberty, like poverty, makes a man acquainted with strange companions!"

"And who's made 'em savages? Who has left them savages? That the greatest nation of the earth has had Ireland in her hands three hundred years—and her people still to be savages!—if that don't justify a revolution, what does? Why, it's just because these poor brutes are what they are, that rebellion becomes a sacred duty. It's for

them—for such fools, brutes, as that there, and the millions more like him, and likely to remain like him, and I've made up my mind to do or die to-morrow!"

There was a grand half-truth, distorted, miscoloured in the words, that silenced me for the time.

We entered Mackaye's door; strangely enough at that time of night, it stood wide open. What could be the matter? I heard loud voices in the inner room, and ran forward calling his name, when, to my astonishment, out past me rushed a tall man, followed by a steaming kettle, which, missing him, took full effect on Kelly's chest as he stood in the entry, filling his shoes with boiling water, and producing a roar that might have been heard at Temple Bar.

"What's the matter?"

"Have I hit him?" said the old man, in a state of unusual excitement.

"Bedad! it was the man Power! the cursed spy! An' just as I was going to slate the villain nately, came the kittle, and kilt me all over!"

"Power? He's as many names as a pickpocket, and as many callings, too, I'll warrant. He came sneaking in to tell me the sogers were a' ready to gie up their arms if I'd come forward to them to-morrow. So I tauld him, sin' he was so sure o't, he'd better gang and tak the arms himsel; an' then he let out he'd been a policeman—"

"A policeman!" said both Crossthwaite and Kelly, with strong expletives.

"A policeman doon in Manchester; I thought I kenned his face fra the first. And when the rascal saw he'd let out too much, he wanted to make out that he'd been a' along a spy for the Chartists, while he was makin' believe to be a spy o' the goovernment's. Sae when he came that far, I just up wi' the het water, and bleezed awa at him; an' noo I maun gang and het some mair for my drap toddy."

Sandy had a little vitriol in the house, so we took the combustible down into the cellar, and tried it. It blazed up: but burnt the stone as much as the reader may expect. We next tried it on a lump of wood. It just scorched the place where it lay, and then went out; leaving poor Kelly

perfectly frantic with rage, terror, and disappointment. He dashed up-stairs, and out into the street, on a wild-goose chase after the rascal, and we saw no more of him that night.

I relate a simple fact. I am afraid—perhaps, for the poor workmen's sake, I should say I am glad, that it was not an unique one. Villains of this kind, both in April and in June, mixed among the working men, excited their worst passions by bloodthirsty declamations and extravagant promises of success, sold them arms; and then, like the shameless wretch on whose evidence Cuffy and Jones were principally convicted, bore witness against their own victims, unblushingly declaring themselves to have been all along the tools of the government. I entreat all those who disbelieve this apparently prodigious assertion, to read the evidence given on the trial of the John Street conspirators, and judge for themselves.

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"The petition's filling faster than ever!" said Crossthwaite, as that evening we returned to Mackaye's little back room.

"Dirt's plenty," grumbled the old man, who had settled himself again to his pipe, with his feet on the fender, and his head half way up the chimney.

"Now, or never!" went on Crossthwaite, without minding him; "now, or never! The manufacturing districts seem more firm than ever."

"An' words cheap," commented Mackaye, *sotto voce*.

"Well," I said, "Heaven keep us from the necessity of ulterior measures! But what must be, must."

"The government expect it, I can tell you. They're in a pitiable funk, I hear. One regiment is ordered to Uxbridge already, because they daren't trust it. They'll find soldiers are men, I do believe, after all."

"Men they are," said Sandy; "an' therefore they'll no be fools eneugh to stan' by an' see ye pu' down a' that is, to build up ye yourselves dinna yet rightly ken what. Men? Ay, an' wi' mair common sense in them than some that had mair opportunities."

"I think I've settled everything," went on Crossthwaite,

who seemed not to have heard the last speech—"settled everything—for poor Katie, I mean. If anything happens to me, she has friends at Cork—she thinks so at least—and they'd get her out to service somewhere—God knows!" And his face worked fearfully a minute.

"Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori!" said I.

"There are twa methods o' fulfilling that saw, I'm thinkin'. Impreemis, to shoot your neebour; in secundis, to hang yoursel."

"What do you mean by grumbling at the whole thing in this way, Mr Mackaye? Are you, too, going to shrink back from The Cause, now that liberty is at the very doors?"

"Ou, then, I'm stanch eneuch. I ha' laid in my ain stock o' weapons for the fecht at Armageddon."

"You don't mean it? What have you got?"

"A braw new halter, an' a muckle nail. There's a gran' tough beam here ayont the ingle, will haud me a' crouse and cantie, when the time comes."

"What on earth do you mean?" asked we both together.

"Ha' ye looked into the monster-petition?"

"Of course we have, and signed it too!"

"Monster? Ay, ferlie! Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum. Desinit in piscem mulier formosa superne. Leeberty, the bonnie lassie, wi' a sealgh's fud to her! I'll no sign it. I dinna consort wi' shoplifters, an' idiots, an' suckin' bairns—wi' long nose, an' short nose, an' pug nose, an' seventeen Deuks o' Wellington, let alone a baker's dizen o' Queens. It's no company, that, for a puir auld patriot!"

"Why, my dear Mackaye," said I, "you know the Reform Bill petitions were just as bad."

"And the Anti-Corn-law ones, too, for that matter," said Crossthwaite. "You know we can't help accidents; the petition will never be looked through."

"It's always been the plan with Whigs and Tories, too!"

"I ken that better than ye, I guess."

"And isn't everything fair in a good cause?" said Crossthwaite.

"Desperate men really can't be so dainty."

"How lang ha' ye learnit that deil's lee, Johnnie? Ye were no o' that mind five years agone, lad. Ha' ye been to Exeter Hall the while? A's fair in the cause o' Mammon; in the cause o' cheap bread, that means cheap wages; but in the cause o' God—wae's me, that ever I suld see this day ower again! ower again! Like the dog to his vomit—just as it was ten, twenty, fifty year agone. I'll just ha' a petition a' alane to mysel—I, an' a twa or three honest men. Besides, ye're just eight days ower time wi' it."

"What do you mean?"

"Suld ha' sent it in the 1st of April, an' no the 10th; a' fool's day wud ha' suited wi' it ferlie!"

"Mr Mackaye," said Crossthwaite, in a passion, "I shall certainly inform the Convention of your extraordinary language!"

"Do, laddie! do, then! An' tell 'em this, too"—and, as he rose, his whole face and figure assumed a dignity, an awfulness, which I had never seen before in him—"tell them that ha' driven out * * * * and * * * *, an' every one that daur speak a word o' common sense, or common humanity—them that stone the prophets, an' quench the Spirit o' God, and love a lie, an' them that mak the same—them that think to bring about the reign o' love an' britherhood wi' pikes an' vitriol bottles, murther an' blasphemy—tell 'em that ane o' fourscore years and mair—ane that has grawn grey in the people's cause—that sat at the feet o' Cartwright, an' knelt by the death-bed o' Rabbie Burns—ane that cheerit Burdett as he went to the Touer, an' spent his wee earnings for Hunt an' Cobbett—ane that beheld the shaking o' the nations in the Ninety-three, and heard the birth-shriek o' a new-born world—ane that while he was yet a callant saw Liberty afar off, an' seeing her was glad, as for a bonny bride, an' followed her through the wilderness for three-score weary waeful years—sends them the last message that e'er he'll send on airth: tell 'em that they're the slaves o' warse than priests and kings—the slaves o' their ain lusts an' passions—the slaves o' every loud-tongued

knave an' mountebank that'll pamper them in their self-conceit; and that the gude God'll smite 'em down, and bring 'em to nought, and scatter 'em abroad, till they repent, an' get clean hearts and a richt speerit within them, and learn His lesson that he's been trying to teach 'em this threescore years—that the cause o' the people is the cause o' Him that made the people; an' wae to them that tak' the deevil's tools to do his wark wi'! Gude guide us!—What was yon, Alton, laddie?"

"What?"

"But I saw a spunk o' fire fa' into your bosom! I've na faith in siccan heathen omens; but auld carlins wud say it's a sign o' death within the year—save ye from it, my puir misguidit bairn! Aiblins a fire-flaught o' my een, it might be—I've had them unco often the day——"

And he stooped down to the fire, and began to light his pipe, muttering to himself—

"Saxty years o' madness! saxty years o' madness! How lang, O Lord, before thou bring these puir daft bodies to their richt mind again?"

We stood watching him, and interchanging looks—expecting something, we knew not what.

Suddenly he sank forward on his knees, with his hands on the bars of the grate; we rushed forward, and caught him up. He turned his eyes up to me, speechless, with a ghastly expression; one side of his face was all drawn aside—and helpless as a child, he let us lift him to his bed, and there he lay staring at the ceiling.

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Four weary days passed by—it was the night of the ninth of April. In the evening of that day his speech returned to him on a sudden—he seemed uneasy about something, and several times asked Katie the day of the month.

"Before the tenth—ay, we maun pray for that. I doubt but I'm ower hearty yet—I canna bide to see the shame o' that day——

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Na—I'll tak no potions nor pills—gin it were na for scruples o' conscience, I'd apocartereeze a'thegither, after

the manner o' the ancient philosophers. But it's no' lawful, I misdoubt, to starve onesel."

"Here is the doctor," said Katie.

"Doctor? Wha ca'd for doctors? Canst thou administer to a mind diseased? Can ye tak long nose, an' short nose, an' snub nose, an' seventeen Deuks o' Wellington out o' my puddins? Will your castor oil, an' your calomel, an' your croton, do that? D'ye ken a medicamentum that'll put brains into workmen——? Non tribus Anticyrus! Tons o' hellebore—acres o' strait waistcoats—a hall police-force o' head-doctors, winna do it. Juvat insanire—this their way is their folly, as auld Benjamin o' Tudela saith of the heathen. Heigho! 'Forty years lang was he grevit wi' this generation, an' swore in his wrath that they suldna enter into his rest.' Pulse? tongue? ay, shak your lugs, an' tak your fee, an' dinna keep auld folk out o' their graves. Can ye sing?"

The doctor meekly confessed his inability.

"That's pity—or I'd gar ye sing Auld-lang-syne,—

We twa hae paidlit in the burn—

Aweel, aweel, aweel——"

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Weary and solemn was that long night, as we sat there, with the crushing weight of the morrow on our mind, watching by that death-bed, listening hour after hour to the rambling soliloquies of the old man, as "he babbled of green fields"; yet I verily believe that to all of us, especially to poor little Katie, the active present interest of tending him kept us from going all but mad with anxiety and excitement. But it was weary work:—and yet, too, strangely interesting, as at times there came scraps of old Scotch love-poetry, contrasting sadly with the grim withered lips that uttered them—hints to me of some sorrow long since suffered, but never healed. I had never heard him allude to such an event before but once, on the first day of our acquaintance.

"I went to the kirk,
My luve sat afore me;
I trow my twa een
Tauld him a sweet story.

Aye wakin o'—
Wakin aye and weary—
I thocht a' the kirk
Saw me and my deary.

'Aye wakin o'!'—Do ye think, noo, we sall ha' knowledge in the next warld o' them we loved on earth? I askit that same o' Rab Burns ance; an' he said, puir chiel, he 'didna ken ower well, we maun bide and see'; —bide and see—that's the gran' philosophy o' life, after a'. Aiblins folk 'll ken their true freens there; an' there'll be na mair luve coft and sauld for siller—

Gear and tocher is needit nane
I' the country whaur my luve is gane.

* * * * *

Gin I had a true freen the noo! to gang down the wynd, an' find if it war but an auld Abraham o' a blue-gown, wi' a bit crowd, or a fizzle-pipe, to play me the Bush aboon Traquair! Na, na, na; it's singing the Lord's song in a strange land, that wad be; an' I hope the application's no irreverent, for ane that was rearit amang the hills o' God, an' the trees o' the forest which he hath planted.

Oh the broom, and the bonny yellow broom,
The broom o' the Cowden-knowes.

Hech, but she wud lilt that bonnily!

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Did ye ever gang listering saumons by nicht? Ou, but it's braw sport, wi' the scars an' the birks a' glowering out blude-red i' the torchlight, and the bonnie hizzies skelping an' skirling on the bank——

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There was a gran' leddy, a bonny leddy, came in and talked like an angel o' God to puir auld Sandy, anent the salvation o' his soul. But I tauld her no' to fash hersel. It's no my view o' human life, that a man's sent into the warld just to save his soul, an' creep out again. An' I said I wad leave the savin' o' my soul to Him that made my soul; it was in richt gude keepin' there, I'd warrant. An' then she was unco fleyed when she found I didna haud wi' the Athanasian creed. An' I tauld her, na; if

He that died on cross was sic a ane as she and I teuk him to be, there was na that pride nor spite in him, be sure, to send a puir auld sinful, guideless body to eternal fire, because he didna a'thegither understand the honour due to his name."

"Who was this lady?"

He did not seem to know; and Katie had never heard of her before—"some district visitor" or other.

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"I sair misdoubt but the auld creeds are in the right anent Him, after a'. I'd gie muckle to think it—there's na comfort as it is. Aiblins there might be a wee comfort in that, for a poor auld worn-out patriot. But it's ower late to change. I tauld her that, too, ance. It's ower late to put new wine into auld bottles. I was unco drawn to the high doctrines ance, when I was a bit laddie, an' sat in the wee kirk by my minnie an' my daddie—a richt stern auld Cameronian sort o' body he was, too; but as I grew, and grew, the bed was ower short for a man to stretch himsel thereon, an' the plaidie ower strait for a man to fauld himself therein; and so I had to gang my gate a' naked in the matter o' formulæ, as Maister Tummas has it."

"Ah! do send for a priest, or a clergyman!" said Katie, who partly understood his meaning.

"Parson? He canna pit new skin on auld scars. Na bit stickit curate-laddie for me, to gang argumentin' wi' ane that's auld enough to be his gran'father. When the parsons will hear me anent God's people, then I'll hear them anent God.

——Sae I'm wearing awa, Jean,
To the land o' the leal—

Gin I ever get thither. Katie, here, hauds wi' purgatory, ye ken! where souls are burnt clean again—like baccy pipes—

When Razor-brigg is ower and past,
Every night and alle;
To Whinny Muir thou comest at last,
And God receive thy sawle.

Gin hosen an' shoon thou gavest nane
Every night and alle;
The whins shall pike thee intil the bane,
And God receive thy sawle.

Amen. There's mair things aboon, as well as below, than are dreamt o' in our philosophy. At least, where'er I go, I'll meet no long nose, nor short nose, nor snub nose patriots there; nor puir gowks stealing the deil's tools to do God's wark wi'. Out among the eternities an' the realities—it's no that dreary outlook, after a', to find truth an' fact—naught but truth an' fact—e'en beside the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched!"

"God forbid!" said Katie.

"God do whatsoever shall please Him, Katie—an' that's aye gude like Himsel'. Shall no the Judge of all the earth do right—right—right?"

And murmuring that word of words to himself, over and over, more and more faintly, he turned slowly over, and seemed to slumber——

Some half hour passed before we tried to stir him. He was dead.

And the candles waned grey, and the great light streamed in through every crack and cranny, and the sun had risen on the Tenth of April. What would be done before the sun had set?

What would be done? Just what we had the might to do; and therefore, according to the formula on which we were about to act, that mights are rights, just what we had a right to do—nothing. Futility, absurdity, vanity, and vexation of spirit. I shall make my next a short chapter. It is a day to be forgotten—and forgiven.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE TENTH OF APRIL.

AND he was gone at last! Kind women, whom his unknown charities had saved from shame, laid him out duly, and closed his eyes, and bound up that face that never would beam again with genial humour, those lips that would never again speak courage and counsel to the sinful, the oppressed, the forgotten. And there he lay, the old warrior, dead upon his shield; worn out by long years of manful toil in The People's Cause; and, saddest thought of all, by disappointment in those for whom he spent his soul. True, he was aged; no one knew how old. He had said, more than eighty years; but we had shortened his life, and we knew it. He would never see that deliverance for which he had been toiling ever since the days when as a boy he had listened to Tooke and Cartwright, and the patriarchs of the people's freedom. Bitter, bitter were our thoughts, and bitter were our tears, as Crossthwaite and I stood watching that beloved face, now in death refined to a grandeur, to a youthful simplicity and delicacy, which we had never seen on it before—calm and strong—the square jaws set firm even in death—the lower lip still clenched above the upper, as if in a divine indignation and everlasting protest, even in the grave, against the devourers of the earth. Yes, he was gone—the old lion, worn out with many wounds, dead in his cage. Where could we replace him? There were gallant men amongst us, eloquent, well-read, earnest—men whose names will ring through this land ere long—men who had been taught wisdom, even as he, by the sinfulness, the

apathy, the ingratitude, as well as by the sufferings of their fellows. But where should we two find again the learning, the moderation, the long experience, above all the more than women's tenderness of him whom we had lost? And at that time, too, of all others! Alas! we had despised his counsel: wayward and fierce we would have none of his reproof; and now God has withdrawn him from us; the righteous was taken away from the evil to come. For we knew that evil was coming. We felt all along that we should *not* succeed. But we were desperate; and his death made us more desperate; still at the moment it drew us nearer to each other. Yes—we were rudderless upon a roaring sea, and all before us blank with lurid blinding mist: but still we were together, to live and die; and as we looked into each other's eyes, and clasped each other's hands above the dead man's face, we felt that there was love between us, as of Jonathan and David, passing the love of woman.

Few words passed. Even our passionate artizan-nature, so sensitive and voluble in general, in comparison with the cold reserve of the field-labourer and the gentleman, was hushed in silent awe between the thought of the past and the thought of the future. We felt ourselves trembling between two worlds. We felt that to-morrow must decide our destiny—and we felt rightly, though little we guessed what that destiny would be!

But it was time to go. We had to prepare for the meeting. We must be at Kennington Common within three hours at furthest; and Crossthwaite hurried away, leaving Katie and me to watch the dead.

And then came across me the thought of another death-bed—my mother's—How she had lain and lain, while I was far away—And then I wondered whether she had suffered much, or faded away at last in a peaceful sleep, as he had—And then I wondered how her corpse had looked; and pictured it to myself, lying in the little old room day after day, till they screwed the coffin down—before I came!—Cruel! Did she look as calm, as grand in death as he who lay there? And as I watched the old man's features, I seemed to trace in them the strangest likeness

to my mother's. The strangest likeness! I could not shake it off. It became intense—miraculous. Was it she, or was it he, who lay there? I shook myself and rose. My loins ached, my limbs were heavy; my brain and eyes swam round. I must be over fatigued by excitement and sleeplessness. I would go down stairs into the fresh air, and shake it off.

As I came down the passage, a woman, dressed in black, was standing at the door, speaking to one of the lodgers. "And he is dead! Oh, if I had but known sooner that he was even ill!"

That voice—that figure—surely, I knew them!—them, at least, there was no mistaking! Or, was it another phantom of my disordered brain! I pushed forward to the door, and as I did so, she turned and our eyes met full. It was she—Lady Ellerton! sad, worn, transformed by widow's weeds, but that face was like no other's still. Why did I drop my eyes and draw back at the first glance like a guilty coward? She beckoned me towards her, went out into the street, and herself began the conversation, from which I shrank, I know not why.

"When did he die?"

"Just at sunrise this morning. But how came you here to visit him? Were you the lady who, as he said, came to him a few days since?"

She did not answer my question. "At sunrise this morning?—A fitting time for him to die, before he sees the ruin and disgrace of those for whom he laboured. And you, too, I hear, are taking your share in this projected madness and iniquity?"

"What right have you," I asked, bristling up at a sudden suspicion that crossed me, "to use such words about me?"

"Recollect," she answered, mildly but firmly, "your conduct, three years ago, at D * * * *."

"What," I said, "was it not proved upon my trial, that I exerted all my powers, endangered my very life, to prevent outrage in that case?"

"It was proved upon your trial," she replied, in a marked tone; "but we were informed, and alas! from

authority only, too good, namely, from that of an ear-witness, of the sanguinary and ferocious language which you were not afraid to use at the meeting in London, only two nights before the riot."

I turned white with rage and indignation.

"Tell me," I said—"tell me, if you have any honour, who dared to forge such an atrocious calumny! No! you need not tell me. I see well enough now. He should have told you that I exposed myself that night to insult, not by advocating, but by opposing violence, as I have always done—as I would now, were not I desperate—hopeless of any other path to liberty. And as for this coming struggle, have I not written to my cousin, humiliating as it was to me, to beg him to warn you all from me, lest——"

I could not finish the sentence.

"You wrote? He has warned us, but he never mentioned your name. He spoke of his knowledge as having been picked up by himself at personal risk to his clerical character."

"The risk, I presume, of being known to have actually received a letter from a Chartist; but I wrote—on my honour I wrote—a week ago; and received no word of answer!"

"Is this true?" she asked.

"A man is not likely to deal in useless falsehoods, who knows not whether he shall live to see the set of sun!"

"Then you are implicated in this expected insurrection?"

"I am implicated," I answered, "with the people; what they do I shall do. Those who once called themselves the patrons of the tailor-poet, left the mistaken enthusiast to languish for three years in prison, without a sign, a hint of mercy, pity, remembrance. Society has cast me off; and, in casting me off, it has sent me off to my own people, where I should have stayed from the beginning. Now I am at my post, because I am among my class. If they triumph peacefully, I triumph with them. If they need blood to gain their rights, be it so. Let the blood be upon the head of those who refuse, not those who demand. At least, I shall be with my own people. And if I die, what better thing on earth can happen to me?"

"But the law?" she said.

"Do not talk to me of law! I know it too well in practice to be moved by any theories about it. Laws are no law, but tyranny, when the few make them, in order to oppress the many by them."

"Oh!" she said, in a voice of passionate earnestness, which I had never heard from her before, "stop—for God's sake, stop! You know not what you are saying—what you are doing. Oh! that I had met you before—that I had had more time to speak to poor Mackaye! Oh! wait, wait—there is a deliverance for you! but never in this path—never. And just while I, and nobler far than I, are longing and struggling to find the means of telling you your deliverance, you, in the madness of your haste, are making it impossible!"

There was a wild sincerity in her words—an almost imploring tenderness in her tone.

"So young!" said she; "so young to be lost thus!"

I was intensely moved. I felt, I knew, that she had a message for me. I felt that hers was the only intellect in the world to which I would have submitted mine; and, for one moment, all the angel and all the devil in me wrestled for the mastery. If I could but have trusted her one moment . . . . . No! all the pride, the spite, the suspicion, the prejudice of years, rolled back upon me. "An aristocrat! and she, too, the one who has kept me from Lillian!" And in my bitterness, not daring to speak the real thought within me, I answered with a flippant sneer—

"Yes, madam! like Cordelia, so young, yet so untender! —Thanks to the mercies of the upper classes!"

Did she turn away in indignation? No, by Heaven! there was nothing upon her face but the intensest yearning pity. If she had spoken again she would have conquered; but before those perfect lips could open, the thought of thoughts flashed across me.

"Tell me one thing! Is my cousin George to be married to ——" and I stopped.

"He is."

"And yet," I said. "you wish to turn me back from

dying on a barricade!" And without waiting for a reply, I hurried down the street in all the fury of despair.

* * * * *

I have promised to say little about the Tenth of April, for indeed I have no heart to do so. Every one of Mackaye's predictions came true. We had arrayed against us, by our own folly, the very physical force to which we had appealed. The dread of general plunder and outrage by the savages of London, the national hatred of that French and Irish interference of which we had boasted, armed against us thousands of special constables, who had in the abstract little or no objection to our political opinions. The practical common sense of England, whatever discontent it might feel with the existing system, refused to let it be hurled rudely down, on the mere chance of building up on its ruins something as yet untried, and even undefined. Above all, the people would not rise. Whatever sympathy they had with us, they did not care to show it. And then futility after futility exposed itself. The meeting which was to have been counted by hundreds of thousands, numbered hardly its tens of thousands; and of them a frightful proportion were of those very rascal classes, against whom we ourselves had offered to be sworn in as special constables. O'Connor's courage failed him after all. He contrived to be called away, at the critical moment, by some problematical superintendent of police. Poor Cuffy, the honestest, if not the wisest, speaker there, leapt off the waggon, exclaiming that we were all "humbugged and betrayed"; and the meeting broke up pitiably piecemeal, drenched and cowed, body and soul, by pouring rain on its way home—for the very heavens mercifully helped to quench our folly—while the monster-petition crawled ludicrously away in a hack cab, to be dragged to the floor of the House of Commons amid roars of laughter—"inextinguishable laughter," as of Tennyson's Epicurean Gods—

> Careless of mankind.
> For they lie beside their nectar, and their bolts are hurled
> Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curled
> Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world.

There they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, *and praying hands.*
But they smile, they find a music, centred in a doleful song,
Steaming up, a lamentation, and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning, though the words are strong
Chanted by an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing little yearly dues of wheat, and wine, and oil;
Till they perish, and they suffer—some, 'tis whispered, down in hell
Suffer endless anguish!———

Truly—truly, great poets' words are vaster than the singers themselves suppose!

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE LOWEST DEEP.

SULLEN, disappointed, desperate, I strode along the streets that evening, careless whither I went. The People's Cause was lost—the Charter a laughing-stock. That the party which monopolizes wealth, rank, and, as it is fancied, education and intelligence, should have been driven, degraded, to appeal to brute force for self-defence—that thought gave me a savage joy; but that it should have conquered by that last, lowest resource!—That the few should be still stronger than the many, or the many still too cold-hearted and coward to face the few—that sickened me. I hated the well-born young special constables whom I passed, because they would have fought. I hated the gent and shop-keeper special constables, because they would have run away. I hated my own party, because they had gone too far—because they had not gone far enough. I hated myself, because I had not produced some marvellous effect—though what that was to have been I could not tell—and hated myself all the more for that ignorance.

A group of effeminate shop-keepers passed me, shouting, "God save the Queen!" "Hypocrites!" I cried in my heart—"they mean 'God save our shops!' Liars! They keep up willingly the useful calumny, that their slaves and victims are disloyal as well as miserable!"

I was utterly abased—no, not utterly; for my self-contempt still vented itself—not in forgiveness, but in universal hatred and defiance. Suddenly I perceived my cousin, laughing and jesting with a party of fashionable

young specials: I shrank from him; and yet, I know not why, drew as near him as I could, unobserved—near enough to catch the words.

"Upon my honour, Locke, I believe you are a Chartist yourself at heart."

"At least I am no Communist," said he, in a significant tone. "There is one little bit of real property which I have no intention of sharing with my neighbours."

"What, the little beauty somewhere near Cavendish Square?"

"That's my business."

"Whereby you mean that you are on your way to her now? Well, I am invited to the wedding, remember."

He pushed on laughingly, without answering. I followed him fast—"near Cavendish Square!"—the very part of the town where Lillian lived! I had had, as yet, a horror of going near it; but now an intolerable suspicion scourged me forward, and I dogged his steps, hiding behind pillars, and at the corners of streets, and then running on, till I got sight of him again. He went through Cavendish Square, up Harley Street—was it possible? I gnashed my teeth at the thought. But it must be so. He stopped at the dean's house, knocked, and entered without parley.

In a minute I was breathless on the door-step, and knocked. I had no plan, no object, except the wild wish to see my own despair. I never thought of the chances of being recognized by the servants, or of anything else, except of Lillian by my cousin's side.

The footman came out smiling, "What did I want?"

"I—I—Mr. Locke."

"Well you needn't be in such a hurry!" (with a significant grin). "Mr. Locke's likely to be busy for a few minutes yet, I expect."

Evidently the man did not know me.

"Tell him that—that a person wishes to speak to him on particular business." Though I had no more notion what that business was than the man himself.

"Sit down in the hall."

And I heard the fellow, a moment afterwards, gossiping

and laughing with the maids below about the "young couple."

To sit down was impossible; my only thought was—where was Lillian?

Voices in an adjoining room caught my ear. His! yes—and hers too—soft and low. What devil prompted me to turn eavesdropper? to run headlong into temptation? I was close to the dining-room door, but they were not there—evidently they were in the back room, which, as I knew, opened into it with folding-doors. I—I must confess all.—Noiselessly, with craft like a madman's, I turned the handle, slipped in as stealthily as a cat—the folding-doors were slightly open. I had a view of all that passed within. A horrible fascination seemed to keep my eyes fixed on them, in spite of myself. Honour, shame, despair, bade me turn away, but in vain.

I saw them.—How can I write it? Yet I will.—I saw them sitting together on the sofa. Their arms were round each other. Her head lay upon his breast; he bent over her with an intense gaze, as of a basilisk, I thought; how do I know that it was not the fierceness of his love? Who could have helped loving her?

Suddenly she raised her head, and looked up in his face—her eyes brimming with tenderness, her cheeks burning with mingled delight and modesty—their lips met, and clung together. . . . It seemed a life—an eternity—before they parted again. Then the spell was broken, and I rushed from the room.

Faint, giddy, and blind, I just recollect leaning against the wall of the staircase. He came hastily out, and started as he saw me. My face told all.

"What? Eavesdropping?" he said, in a tone of unutterable scorn. I answered nothing, but looked stupidly and fixedly in his face, while he glared at me with that keen, burning, intolerable eye. I longed to spring at his throat, but that eye held me as the snake's holds the deer. At last I found words.

"Traitor! everywhere—in everything—tricking me—supplanting me—in my friends—in my love!"

"Your love? Yours?" And the fixed eye still glared

upon me. "Listen, cousin Alton! The strong and the weak have been matched for the same prize: and what wonder, if the strong man conquers? Go and ask Lillian how she likes the thought of being a Communist's love!"

As when, in a nightmare, we try by a desperate effort to break the spell, I sprang forward, and struck at him, he put my hand by carelessly, and felled me bleeding to the ground. I recollect hardly anything more, till I found myself thrust into the street by sneering footmen, and heard them call after me "Chartist" and "Communist" as I rushed along the pavement, careless where I went.

I strode and staggered on through street after street, running blindly against passengers, dashing under horses' heads, heedless of warnings and execrations, till I found myself, I know not how, on Waterloo Bridge. I had meant to go there when I left the door. I knew that at least—and now I was there.

I buried myself in a recess of the bridge, and stared around and up and down.

I was alone—deserted even by myself. Mother, sister, friends, love, the idol of my life, were all gone. I could have borne that. But to be shamed, and know that I deserved it; to be deserted by my own honour, self-respect, strength of will—who can bear that?

I could have borne it, had one thing been left—faith in my own destiny—the inner hope that God had called me to do a work for him.

"What drives the Frenchman to suicide?" I asked myself, arguing ever even in the face of death and hell—"His faith in nothing but his own lusts and pleasures; and when they are gone, then comes the pan of charcoal—and all is over. What drives the German? His faith in nothing but his own brain. He has fallen down and worshipped that miserable 'Ich' of his, and made that, and not God's will, the centre and root of his philosophy, his poetry, and his self-idolizing æsthetics; and when it fails him, then for prussic acid, and nonentity. Those old Romans, too—why, they are the very experimentum crucis of suicide! As long as they fancied that they had

a calling to serve the state, they could live on and suffer. But when they found no more work left for them, then they could die—as Porcia died—as Cato—as I ought. What is there left for me to do? outcast, disgraced, useless, decrepit——"

I looked out over the bridge into the desolate night. Below me the dark moaning river-eddies hurried downward. The wild west-wind howled past me, and leapt over the parapet downward. The huge reflexion of Saint Paul's, the great tap-roots of light from lamp and window that shone upon the lurid stream, pointed down—down—down. A black wherry shot through the arch beneath me, still and smoothly downward. My brain began to whirl madly—I sprang upon the step.—A man rushed past me, clambered on the parapet, and threw up his arms wildly.—A moment more, and he would have leapt into the stream. The sight recalled me to my senses—say, rather, it reawoke in me the spirit of manhood. I seized him by the arm, tore him down upon the pavement, and held him, in spite of his frantic struggles. It was Jemmy Downes! Gaunt, ragged, sodden, blear-eyed, drivelling, the worn-out gin-drinker stood, his momentary paroxysm of strength gone, trembling and staggering.

"Why won't you let a cove die? Why won't you let a cove die? They're all dead—drunk, and poisoned, and dead! What is there left?"—he burst out suddenly in his old ranting style—"what is there left on earth to live for? The prayers of liberty are answered by the laughter of tyrants; her sun is sunk beneath the ocean wave, and her pipe put out by the raging billows of aristocracy! Those starving millions of Kennington Common—where are they? Where? I axes you," he cried fiercely, raising his voice to a womanish scream—"where are they?"

"Gone home to bed, like sensible people; and you had better go too."

"Bed! I sold ours a month ago; but we'll go. Come along, and I'll show you my wife and family; and we'll have a tea-party—Jacob's Island tea. Come along!

> Flea, flea, unfortunate flea!
> Bereft of his wife and his small family!"

He clutched my arm, and dragging me off towards the Surrey side, turned down Stamford Street.

I followed half perforce; and the man seemed quite demented—whether with gin or sorrow I could not tell. As he strode along the pavement, he kept continually looking back, with a perplexed terrified air, as if expecting some fearful object.

"The rats!—the rats! don't you see 'em coming out of the gullyholes, atween the area railings—dozens and dozens?"

"No; I saw none."

"You lie; I hear their tails whisking; there's their shiny hats a glistening, and every one on 'em with peelers' staves! Quick! quick! or they'll have me to the station-house."

"Nonsense!" I said; "we are free men! What are the policemen to us?"

"You lie!" cried he, with a fearful oath, and a wrench at my arm which almost threw me down. "Do you call a sweater's man a free man?"

"You a sweater's man?"

"Ay!" with another oath. "My men ran away—folks said I drank, too; but here I am; and I, that sweated others, I'm sweated myself—and I'm a slave! I'm a slave—a negro slave, I am, you aristocrat villain!"

"Mind me, Downes; if you will go quietly, I will go with you; but if you do not let go of my arm, I give you in charge to the first policeman I meet."

"Oh, don't, don't!" whined the miserable wretch, as he almost fell on his knees, gin-drinkers' tears running down his face, "or I shall be too late.—And then the rats 'll get in at the roof, and up through the floor, and eat 'em all up, and my work too—the grand new three-pound coat that I've been stitching at this ten days, for the sum of one half-crown sterling—and don't I wish I may see the money? Come on, quick; there are the rats, close behind!" And he dashed across the broad roaring thoroughfare of Bridge Street, and hurrying almost at a run down Tooley Street, plunged into the wilderness of Bermondsey.

He stopped at the end of a miserable blind alley, where a dirty gas-lamp just served to make darkness visible, and show the patched windows and rickety doorways of the crazy houses, whose upper stories were lost in a brooding cloud of fog; and the pools of stagnant water at our feet; and the huge heap of cinders which filled up the waste end of the alley—a dreary, black, formless mound, on which two or three spectral dogs prowled up and down after the offal, appearing and vanishing like dark imps in and out of the black misty chaos beyond.

The neighbourhood was undergoing, as it seemed, "improvements" of that peculiar metropolitan species which consists in pulling down the dwellings of the poor, and building up rich men's houses instead; and great buildings, within high temporary palings, had already eaten up half the little houses; as the great fish, and the great estates, and the great shopkeepers, eat up the little ones of their species—by the law of competition, lately discovered to be the true creator and preserver of the universe. There they loomed up, the tall bullies, against the dreary sky, looking down with their grim, proud, stony visages, on the misery which they were driving out of one corner, only to accumulate and intensify it in another.

The house at which we stopped was the last in the row; all its companions had been pulled down; and there it stood, leaning out with one naked ugly side into the gap, and stretching out long props, like feeble arms and crutches, to resist the work of demolition.

A group of slatternly people were in the entry, talking loudly, and as Downes pushed by them, a woman seized him by the arm.

"Oh! you unnatural villain!—To go away after your drink, and leave all them poor dear dead corpses locked up, without even letting a body go in to stretch them out!"

"And breeding the fever, too, to poison the whole house!" growled one

"The relieving officer's been here, my cove," said

another, "and he's gone for a peeler and a search warrant to break open the door, I can tell you!"

But Downes pushed past unheeding, unlocked a door at the end of the passage, thrust me in, locked it again, and then rushed across the room in chase of two or three rats, who vanished into cracks and holes.

And what a room! A low lean-to with wooden walls, without a single article of furniture; and through the broad chinks of the floor shone up as it were ugly glaring eyes, staring at us. They were the reflexions of the rushlight in the sewer below. The stench was frightful—the air heavy with pestilence. The first breath I drew made my heart sink, and my stomach turn. But I forgot everything in the object which lay before me, as Downes tore a half-finished coat off three corpses laid side by side on the bare floor.

There was his little Irish wife:—dead—and naked; the wasted white limbs gleamed in the lurid light; the unclosed eyes stared, as if reproachfully, at the husband whose drunkenness had brought her there to kill her with the pestilence; and on each side of her a little, shrivelled, impish, child-corpse,—the wretched man had laid their arms round the dead mother's neck—and there they slept, their hungering and wailing over at last for ever; the rats had been busy already with them—but what matter to them now?

"Look!" he cried; "I watched 'em dying! Day after day I saw the devils come up through the cracks, like little maggots and beetles, and all manner of ugly things, creeping down their throats; and I asked 'em, and they said they were the fever devils."

It was too true; the poisonous exhalations had killed them. The wretched man's delirium tremens had given that horrible substantiality to the poisonous fever gases.

Suddenly Downes turned on me, almost menacingly. "Money! money! I want some gin!"

I was thoroughly terrified—and there was no shame in feeling fear, locked up with a madman far my superior in size and strength, in so ghastly a place. But the shame and the folly too, would have been in giving way to my

fear; and with a boldness half assumed, half the real fruit of excitement and indignation at the horrors I beheld, I answered—

"If I had money, I would give you none. What do you want with gin? Look at the fruits of your accursed tippling. If you had taken my advice, my poor fellow," I went on, gaining courage as I spoke, "and become a water-drinker, like me——"

"Curse you and your water-drinking! If you had had no water to drink or wash with for two years but that—that," pointing to the foul ditch below—"if you had emptied the slops in there with one hand, and filled your kettle with the other——"

"Do you actually mean that that sewer is your only drinking water?"

"Where else can we get any? Everybody drinks it; and you shall, too—you shall!" he cried, with a fearful oath, "and then see if you don't run off to the gin-shop, to take the taste of it out of your mouth. Drink? and who can help drinking, with his stomach turned with such hell-broth as that—or such a hell's blast as this air is here, ready to vomit from morning till night with the smells? I'll show you. You shall drink a bucket full of it, as sure as you live, you shall."

And he ran out of the back door, upon a little balcony, which hung over the ditch.

I tried the door, but the key was gone, and the handle too. I beat furiously on it, and called for help. Two gruff authoritative voices were heard in the passage.

"Let us in; I'm the policeman!"

"Let me out, or mischief will happen!"

The policeman made a vigorous thrust at the crazy door; and just as it burst open, and the light of his lantern streamed into the horrible den, a heavy splash was heard outside.

"He has fallen into the ditch!"

"He'll be drowned, then, as sure as he's a born man," shouted one of the crowd behind.

We rushed out on the balcony. The light of the policeman's lantern glared over the ghastly scene—along

the double row of miserable house-backs, which lined the sides of the open tidal ditch—over strange rambling jetties, and balconies, and sleeping-sheds, which hung on rotting piles over the black waters, with phosphorescent scraps of rotten fish gleaming and twinkling out of the dark hollows, like devilish grave-lights—over bubbles of poisonous gas, and bloated carcases of dogs, and lumps of offal, floating on the stagnant olive-green hell-broth—over the slow sullen rows of oily ripple which were dying away into the darkness far beyond, sending up, as they stirred, hot breaths of miasma—the only sign that a spark of humanity, after years of foul life, had quenched itself at last in that foul death. I almost fancied that I could see the haggard face staring up at me through the slimy water; but no, it was as opaque as stone.

I shuddered and went in again, to see slatternly gin-smelling women stripping off their clothes—true women even there—to cover the poor naked corpses; and pointing to the bruises which told a tale of long tyranny and cruelty; and mingling their lamentations with stories of shrieks and beating, and children locked up for hours to starve; and the men looked on sullenly, as if they too were guilty, or rushed out to relieve themselves by helping to find the drowned body. Ugh! it was the very mouth of hell, that room. And in the midst of all the rout, the relieving officer stood impassive, jotting down scraps of information, and warning us to appear the next day, to state what we knew before the magistrates. Needless hypocrisy of law! Too careless to save the woman and children from brutal tyranny, nakedness, starvation!—Too superstitious to offend its idol of vested interests, by protecting the poor man against his tyrants, the house-owning shopkeepers under whose greed the dwellings of the poor become nests of filth and pestilence, drunkenness and degradation. Careless, superstitious, imbecile law!—leaving the victims to die unhelped, and then, when the fever and the tyranny has done its work, in thy sanctimonious prudishness, drugging thy respectable conscience by a "searching inquiry" as to how it all

happened—lest, forsooth, there should have been "foul play!" Is the knife or the bludgeon, then, the only foul play, and not the cesspool and the curse of Rabshakeh? Go through Bermondsey or Spitalfields, St. Giles's or Lambeth, and see if *there* is not foul play enough already —to be tried hereafter at a more awful coroner's inquest than thou thinkest of!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DREAMLAND.

It must have been two o'clock in the morning before I reached my lodgings. Too much exhausted to think, I hurried to my bed. I remember now that I reeled strangely as I went up-stairs. I lay down, and was asleep in an instant.

How long I had slept I know not, when I awoke with a strange confusion and whirling in my brain, and an intolerable weight and pain about my back and loins. By the light of the gas-lamp I saw a figure standing at the foot of my bed. I could not discern the face, but I knew instinctively that it was my mother. I called to her again and again, but she did not answer. She moved slowly away, and passed out through the wall of the room.

I tried to follow her, but could not. An enormous, unutterable weight seemed to lie upon me. The bed-clothes grew and grew before me, and upon me, into a vast mountain, millions of miles in height. Then it seemed all glowing red, like the cone of a volcano. I heard the roaring of the fires within, the rattling of the cinders down the heaving slope. A river ran from its summit; and up that river-bed it seemed I was doomed to climb and climb for ever, millions and millions of miles upwards, against the rushing stream. The thought was intolerable, and I shrieked aloud. A raging thirst had seized me. I tried to drink the river-water: but it was boiling hot—sulphurous—reeking of putrefaction. Suddenly I fancied that I could pass round the foot of

the mountain; and jumbling, as madmen will, the sublime and the ridiculous, I sprang up to go round the foot of my bed, which was the mountain.

I recollect lying on the floor. I recollect the people of the house, who had been awoke by my shriek and my fall, rushing in and calling to me. I could not rise or answer. I recollect a doctor; and talk about brain fever and delirium. It was true. I was in a raging fever. And my fancy, long pent-up and crushed by circumstances, burst out in uncontrollable wildness, and swept my other faculties with it helpless away over all heaven and earth, presenting to me, as in a vast kaleidoscope, fantastic symbols of all I had ever thought, or read, or felt.

That fancy of the mountain returned; but I had climbed it now. I was wandering along the lower ridge of the Himalaya. On my right the line of snow peaks showed like a rosy saw against the clear blue morning sky. Raspberries and cyclamens were peeping through the snow around me. As I looked down the abysses, I could see far below, through the thin veils of blue mist that wandered in the glens, the silver spires of giant deodars, and huge rhododendrons glowing like trees of flame. The longing of my life to behold that cradle of mankind was satisfied. My eyes revelled in vastness, as they swept over the broad flat jungle at the mountain foot, a desolate sheet of dark gigantic grasses, furrowed with the paths of the buffalo and rhinoceros, with barren sandy water-courses, desolate pools, and here and there a single tree, stunted with malaria, shattered by mountain floods; and far beyond, the vast plains of Hindostan, enlaced with myriad silver rivers and canals, tanks and rice-fields, cities with their mosques and minarets, gleaming among the stately palm-groves along the boundless horizon. Above me was a Hindoo temple, cut out of the yellow sandstone. I climbed up to the higher tier of pillars among monstrous shapes of gods and fiends, that mouthed and writhed and mocked at me, struggling to free themselves from their bed of rock. The bull Nundi rose and tried to gore me; hundred-handed gods brandished quoits and sabres round my head; and Kali dropped the skull

from her gore-dripping jaws, to clutch me for her prey. Then my mother came, and seizing the pillars of the portico, bent them like reeds: an earthquake shook the hills—great sheets of woodland slid roaring and crashing into the valleys—a tornado swept through the temple halls, which rocked and tossed like a vessel in a storm: a crash—a cloud of yellow dust which filled the air—choked me—blinded me—buried me—

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And Eleanor came by, and took my soul in the palm of her hand, as the angels did Faust's, and carried it to a cavern by the seaside, and dropped it in; and I fell and fell for ages. And all the velvet mosses, rock flowers, and sparkling spars and ores, fell with me, round me, in showers of diamonds, whirlwinds of emerald and ruby, and pattered into the sea that moaned below, and were quenched; and the light lessened above me to one small spark, and vanished; and I was in darkness, and turned again to my dust.

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And I was at the lowest point of created life; a madrepore rooted to the rock, fathoms below the tide-mark; and worst of all, my individuality was gone. I was not one thing, but many things—a crowd of innumerable polypi; and I grew and grew, and the more I grew the more I divided, and multiplied thousand and ten thousandfold. If I could have thought, I should have gone mad at it; but I could only feel.

And I heard Eleanor and Lillian talking, as they floated past me through the deep, for they were two angels; and Lillian said, "When will he be one again?"

And Eleanor said, "He who falls from the golden ladder must climb through ages to its top. He who tears himself in pieces by his lusts, ages only can make him one again. The madrepore shall become a shell, and the shell a fish, and the fish a bird, and the bird a beast; and then he shall become a man again, and see the glory of the latter days."

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And I was a soft crab, under a stone on the sea-shore. With infinite starvation, and struggling, and kicking, I had got rid of my armour, shield by shield, and joint by joint, and cowered, naked and pitiable, in the dark, among dead shells and ooze. Suddenly the stone was turned up; and there was my cousin's hated face laughing at me, and pointing me out to Lillian. She laughed too, as I looked up, sneaking, ashamed, and defenceless, and squared up at him with my soft useless claws. Why should she not laugh? Are not crabs, and toads, and monkeys, and a hundred other strange forms of animal life, jests of nature —embodiments of a divine humour, at which men are meant to laugh and be merry? But, alas! my cousin, as he turned away, thrust the stone back with his foot, and squelched me flat.

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And I was a remora, weak and helpless, till I could attach myself to some living thing; and then I had power to stop the largest ship. And Lillian was a flying fish, and skimmed over the crests of the waves on gauzy wings. And my cousin was a huge shark, rushing after her, greedy and open-mouthed; and I saw her danger, and clung to him, and held him back; and just as I had stopped him, she turned and swam back into his open jaws.

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Sand—sand—nothing but sand! The air was full of sand drifting over granite temples, and painted kings and triumphs, and the skulls of a former world; and I was an ostrich, flying madly before the simoon wind, and the giant sand pillars, which stalked across the plains, hunting me down. And Lillian was an Amazon queen, beautiful, and cold, and cruel; and she rode upon a charmed horse, and carried behind her on her saddle a spotted ounce, which was my cousin; and, when I came near her, she made him leap down and course me. And we ran for miles and for days through the interminable sand, till he sprung on me, and dragged me down. And

as I lay quivering and dying, she reined in her horse above me, and looked down at me with beautiful, pitiless eyes; and a wild Arab tore the plumes from my wings, and she took them and wreathed them in her golden hair. The broad and blood-red sun sank down beneath the sand, and the horse and the Amazon and the ostrich plumes shone blood-red in his lurid rays.

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I was a mylodon among South American forests—a vast sleepy mass, my elephantine limbs and yard-long talons contrasting strangely with the little meek rabbit's head, furnished with a poor dozen of clumsy grinders, and a very small kernel of brains, whose highest consciousness was the enjoyment of muscular strength. Where I had picked up the sensation which my dreams realized for me, I know not: my waking life, alas! had never given me experience of it. Has the mind power of creating sensations for itself? Surely it does so, in those delicious dreams about flying which haunt us poor wingless mortals, which would seem to give my namesake's philosophy the lie. However that may be, intense and new was the animal delight, to plant my hinder claws at some tree-foot deep into the black rotting vegetable-mould which steamed rich gases up wherever it was pierced, and clasp my huge arms round the stem of some palm or tree-fern; and then slowly bring my enormous weight and muscle to bear upon it, till the stem bent like a withe, and the laced bark cracked, and the fibres groaned and shrieked, and the roots sprung up out of the soil; and then, with a slow circular wrench, the whole tree was twisted bodily out of the ground, and the maddening tension of my muscles suddenly relaxed, and I sank sleepily down upon the turf, to browse upon the crisp tart foliage, and fall asleep in the glare of sunshine which streamed through the new gap in the green forest roof. Much as I had envied the strong, I had never before suspected the delight of mere physical exertion. I now understood the wild gambols of the dog, and the madness which makes the horse gallop and strain onwards till he

drops and dies. They fulfil their nature, as I was doing, and in that is always happiness.

But I did more—whether from mere animal destructiveness, or from the spark of humanity which was slowly rekindling in me, I began to delight in tearing up trees for its own sake. I tried my strength daily on thicker and thicker boles. I crawled up to the high palm-tops, and bowed them down by my weight. My path through the forest was marked, like that of a tornado, by snapped and prostrate stems and withering branches. Had I been a few degrees more human, I might have expected a retribution for my sin. I had fractured my own skull three or four times already. I used often to pass the carcases of my race, killed, as geologists now find them, by the fall of the trees they had overthrown; but still I went on, more and more reckless, a slave, like many a so-called man, to the mere sense of power.

One day I wandered to the margin of the woods, and climbing a tree, surveyed a prospect new to me. For miles and miles, away to the white line of the smoking Cordillera, stretched a low rolling plain; one vast thistle-bed, the down of which flew in grey gauzy clouds before a soft fitful breeze; innumerable finches fluttered and pecked above it, and bent the countless flower-heads. Far away, one tall tree rose above the level thistle-ocean. A strange longing seized me to go and tear it down. The forest leaves seemed tasteless; my stomach sickened at them; nothing but that tree would satisfy me; and descending, I slowly brushed my way, with half-shut eyes, through the tall thistles which buried even my bulk.

At last, after days of painful crawling, I dragged my unwieldiness to the tree-foot. Around it the plain was bare, and scored by burrows and heaps of earth, among which gold, some in dust, some in great knots and ingots, sparkled everywhere in the sun, in fearful contrast to the skulls and bones which lay bleaching round. Some were human, some were those of vast and monstrous beasts. I knew (one knows everything in dreams) that they had been slain by the winged ants, as large as panthers, who snuffed and watched around over the magic treasure. Of

them I felt no fear; and they seemed not to perceive me, as I crawled, with greedy, hunger-sharpened eyes, up to the foot of the tree. It seemed miles in height. Its stem was bare and polished like a palm's, and above a vast feathery crown of dark green velvet slept in the still sunlight. But wonders of wonders! from among the branches hung great sea-green lilies, and, nestled in the heart of each of them, the bust of a beautiful girl. Their white bosoms and shoulders gleamed rosy-white against the emerald petals, like conch-shells half-hidden among sea-weeds, while their delicate waists melted mysteriously into the central sanctuary of the flower. Their long arms and golden tresses waved languishingly downward in the breeze; their eyes glittered like diamonds; their breaths perfumed the air. A blind ecstasy seized me—I awoke again to humanity, and fiercely clasping the tree, shook and tore at it, in the blind hope of bringing nearer to me the magic beauties above: for I knew that I was in the famous land of Wak-Wak, from which the Eastern merchants used to pluck those flower-born beauties, and bring them home to fill the harems of the Indian kings. Suddenly I heard a rustling in the thistles behind me, and looking round saw again that dreaded face—my cousin!

He was dressed—strange jumble that dreams are!—like an American backwoodsman. He carried the same revolver and bowie-knife which he had showed me the fatal night that he intruded on the Chartist club. I shook with terror; but he, too, did not see me. He threw himself on his knees, and began fiercely digging and scraping for the gold.

The winged ants rushed on him, but he looked up, and "held them with his glittering eye," and they shrank back abashed into the thistle covert; while I strained and tugged on, and the faces of the dryads above grew sadder and older, and their tears fell on me like a fragrant rain.

Suddenly the tree-bole cracked—it was tottering. I looked round, and saw that my cousin knelt directly in the path of its fall. I tried to call to him to move; but how could a poor edentate like myself articulate a word?

I tried to catch his attention by signs—he would not see. I tried, convulsively, to hold the tree up, but it was too late; a sudden gust of air swept by, and down it rushed, with a roar like a whirlwind, and leaving my cousin untouched, struck me full across the loins, broke my backbone, and pinned me to the ground in mortal agony. I heard one wild shriek rise from the flower fairies, as they fell each from the lily cup, no longer of full human size, but withered, shrivelled, diminished a thousand-fold, and lay on the bare sand, like little rosy humming-birds' eggs, all crushed and dead.

The great blue heaven above me spoke, and cried, "Selfish and sense-bound! thou hast murdered beauty!"

The sighing thistle-ocean answered, and murmured, "Discontented! thou hast murdered beauty!"

One flower fairy alone lifted up her tiny cheek from the gold-strewn sand, and cried, "Presumptuous! thou hast murdered beauty!"

It was Lillian's face—Lillian's voice! My cousin heard it too, and turned eagerly; and as my eyes closed in the last death-shiver, I saw him coolly pick up the little beautiful figure, which looked like a fragment of some exquisite cameo, and deliberately put it away in his cigar-case, as he said to himself, "A charming tit-bit for me, when I return from the diggings"!

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When I awoke again, I was a baby-ape in Borneon forests, perched among fragrant trailers and fantastic orchis flowers; and as I looked down, beneath the green roof, into the clear waters paved with unknown water-lilies on which the sun had never shone, I saw my face reflected in the pool—a melancholy, thoughtful countenance, with large projecting brow—it might have been a negro child's. And I felt stirring in me, germs of a new and higher consciousness—yearnings of love towards the mother ape, who fed me and carried me from tree to tree. But I grew and grew; and then the weight of my destiny fell upon me. I saw year by year my brow recede, my neck enlarge, my jaw protrude; my

teeth became tusks; skinny wattles grew from my cheeks —the animal faculties in me were swallowing up the intellectual. I watched in myself, with stupid self-disgust, the fearful degradation which goes on from youth to age in all the monkey race, especially in those which approach nearest to the human form. Long melancholy mopings, fruitless strugglings to think, were periodically succeeded by wild frenzies, agonies of lust and aimless ferocity. I flew upon my brother apes, and was driven off with wounds. I rushed howling down into the village gardens, destroying everything I met. I caught the birds and insects, and tore them to pieces with savage glee. One day, as I sat among the boughs, I saw Lillian coming along a flowery path—decked as Eve might have been, the day she turned from Paradise. The skins of gorgeous birds were round her waist; her hair was wreathed with fragrant tropic flowers. On her bosom lay a baby—it was my cousin's. I knew her, and hated her. The madness came upon me. I longed to leap from the bough and tear her limb from limb; but brutal terror, the dread of man which is the doom of beasts, kept me rooted to my place. Then my cousin came—a hunter missionary; and I heard him talk to her with pride of the new world of civilization and Christianity which he was organizing in that tropic wilderness. I listened with a dim jealous understanding—not of the words, but of the facts. I saw them instinctively, as in a dream. She pointed up to me in terror and disgust, as I sat gnashing and gibbering overhead. He threw up the muzzle of his rifle carelessly, and fired—I fell dead, but conscious still. I knew that my carcase was carried to the settlement; and I watched while a smirking, chuckling surgeon dissected me, bone by bone, and nerve by nerve. And as he was fingering at my heart, and discoursing sneeringly about Van Helmont's dreams of the Archæus, and the animal spirit which dwells within the solar plexus, Eleanor glided by again, like an angel, and drew my soul out of the knot of nerves, with one velvet finger-tip.

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Child-dreams—more vague and fragmentary than my animal ones; and yet more calm and simple, and gradually, as they led me onward through a new life, ripening into detail, coherence, and reflection. Dreams of a hut among the valleys of Thibet—the young of forest animals, wild cats, and dogs, and fowls, brought home to be my playmates, and grow up tame around me. Snow-peaks which glittered white against the nightly sky, barring in the horizon of the narrow valley, and yet seeming to beckon upwards, outwards. Strange unspoken aspirations; instincts which pointed to unfulfilled powers, a mighty destiny. A sense, awful and yet cheering, of a wonder and a majesty, a presence and a voice around, in the cliffs and the pine forests, and the great blue rainless heaven. The music of loving voices, the sacred names of child and father, mother, brother, sister, first of all inspirations.—Had we not an All-Father, whose eyes looked down upon us from among those stars above; whose hand upheld the mountain roots below us? Did He not love us, too, even as we loved each other?

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The noise of wheels crushing slowly through meadows of tall marigolds and asters, orchises and fragrant lilies. I lay, a child, upon a woman's bosom. Was she my mother, or Eleanor, or Lillian? Or was she neither, and yet all—some ideal of the great Arian tribe, containing in herself all future types of European women? So I slept and woke, and slept again, day after day, week after week, in the lazy bullock-waggon, among herds of grey cattle, guarded by huge lop-eared mastiffs; among shaggy white horses, heavy-horned sheep, and silky goats; among tall, bare-limbed men, with stone axes on their shoulders, and horn bows at their backs. Westward, through the boundless steppes, whither or why we knew not; but that the All-Father had sent us forth. And behind us the rosy snow-peaks died into ghastly grey, lower and lower as every evening came; and before us the plains spread infinite, with gleaming salt-lakes, and ever fresh tribes of gaudy flowers. Behind us dark lines of living beings streamed down the mountain slopes;

around us dark lines crawled along the plains—all westward, westward ever.—The tribes of the Holy Mountain poured out like water to replenish the earth and subdue it—lava-streams from the crater of that great soul-volcano —Titan babies, dumb angels of God, bearing with them in their unconscious pregnancy the law, the freedom, the science, the poetry, the Christianity of Europe and the world.

Westward ever—who could stand against us? We met the wild asses on the steppe, and tamed them, and made them our slaves. We slew the bison herds, and swam broad rivers on their skins. The Python snake lay across our path; the wolves and the wild dogs snarled at us out of their coverts; we slew them and went on. The forest rose in black tangled barriers: we hewed our way through them and went on. Strange giant tribes met us, and eagle-visaged hordes, fierce and foolish; we smote them hip and thigh, and went on, westward ever. Days and weeks and months rolled on, and our wheels rolled on with them. New alps rose up before us; we climbed and climbed them, till, in lonely glens, the mountain walls stood up, and barred our path.

Then one arose and said, "Rocks are strong, but the All-Father is stronger. Let us pray to Him to send the earthquakes, and blast the mountains asunder."

So we sat down and prayed, but the earthquake did not come.

Then another arose and said, Rocks are strong, but the All-Father is stronger. If we are the children of the All-Father, we, too, are stronger than the rocks. Let us portion out the valley, to every man an equal plot of ground; and bring out the sacred seeds, and sow, and build, and come up with me and bore the mountain."

And all said, "It is the voice of God. We will go up with thee, and bore the mountain; and thou shalt be our king, for thou art wisest, and the spirit of the All-Father is on thee; and whosoever will not go up with thee shall die as a coward and an idler."

So we went up; and in the morning we bored the mountain, and at night we came down and tilled the

ground, and sowed wheat and barley, and planted orchards. And in the upper glens we met the mining dwarfs, and saw their tools of iron and copper, and their rock-houses and forges, and envied them. But they would give us none of them: then our king said—

"The All-Father has given all things and all wisdom. Woe to him who keeps them to himself: we will teach you to sow the sacred seeds; and do you teach us your smith-work, or you die."

Then the dwarfs taught us smith-work; and we loved them, for they were wise; and they married our sons and daughters; and we went on boring the mountain.

Then some of us arose and said, "We are stronger than our brethren, and can till more ground than they. Give us a greater portion of land, to each according to his power."

But the king said, "Wherefore? that ye may eat and drink more than your brethren? Have you larger stomachs, as well as stronger arms? As much as a man needs for himself, that he may do for himself. The rest is the gift of the All-Father, and we must do His work therewith. For the sake of the women and the children, for the sake of the sick and the aged, let him that is stronger go up and work the harder at the mountain." And all men said, "It is well spoken."

So we were all equal—for none took more than he needed; and we were all free, because we loved to obey the king by whom the spirit spoke; and we were all brothers, because we had one work, and one hope, and one All-Father.

But I grew up to be a man; and twenty years were past, and the mountain was not bored through; and the king grew old, and men began to love their flocks and herds better than quarrying, and they gave up boring through the mountain. And the strong and the cunning said, "What can we do with all this might of ours?" So, because they had no other way of employing it, they turned it against each other, and swallowed up the heritage of the weak: and a few grew rich, and many poor; and the valley was filled with sorrow, for the land became too narrow for them.

Then I arose and said, "How is this?" And they said, "We must make provision for our children."

And I answered, "The All-Father meant neither you nor your children to devour your brethren. Why do you not break up more waste ground? Why do you not try to grow more corn in your fields?"

And they answered, "We till the ground as our forefathers did: we will keep to the old traditions.'

And I answered, "Oh ye hypocrites! have ye not forgotten the old traditions, that each man should have his equal share of ground, and that we should go on working at the mountain, for the sake of the weak and the children, the fatherless and the widow?"

And they answered nought for a while.

Then one said, "Are we not better off as we are? We buy the poor man's ground for a price, and we pay him his wages for tilling it for us—and we know better how to manage it than he."

And I said, "Oh ye hypocrites! See how your lie works! Those who were free are now slaves. Those who had peace of mind are now anxious from day to day for their daily bread. And the multitude gets poorer and poorer, while ye grow fatter and fatter. If ye had gone on boring the mountain, ye would have had no time to eat up your brethren."

Then they laughed and said, "Thou art a singer of songs, and a dreamer of dreams. Let those who want to get through the mountain go up and bore it; we are well enough here. Come now, sing us pleasant songs, and talk no more foolish dreams, and we will reward thee."

Then they brought out a veiled maiden, and said, "Look! her feet are like ivory, and her hair like threads of gold; and she is the sweetest singer in the whole valley. And she shall be thine, if thou wilt be like other people, and prophesy smooth things unto us, and torment us no more with talk about liberty, equality, and brotherhood; for they never were, and never will be, on this earth. Living is too hard work to give in to such fancies."

And when the maiden's veil was lifted, it was Lillian. And she clasped me round the neck, and cried, "Come! I

will be your bride, and you shall be rich and powerful; and all men shall speak well of you, and you shall write songs, and we will sing them together, and feast and play from dawn to dawn."

And I wept; and turned me about, and cried, "Wife and child, song and wealth, are pleasant; but blessed is the work which the All-Father has given the people to do. Let the maimed and the halt and the blind, the needy and the fatherless, come up after me, and we will bore the mountain."

But the rich drove me out, and drove back those who would have followed me. So I went up by myself, and bored the mountain seven years, weeping; and every year Lillian came to me, and said, "Come, and be my husband, for my beauty is fading, and youth passes fast away." But I set my heart steadfastly to the work.

And when seven years were over, the poor were so multiplied, that the rich had not wherewith to pay their labour. And there came a famine in the land, and many of the poor died. Then the rich said, "If we let these men starve, they will turn on us, and kill us, for hunger has no conscience, and they are all but like the beasts that perish." So they all brought, one a bullock, another a sack of meal, each according to his substance, and fed the poor therewith; and said to them, "Behold our love and mercy towards you!" But the more they gave, the less they had wherewithal to pay their labourers; and the more they gave, the less the poor liked to work; so that at last they had not wherewithal to pay for tilling the ground, and each man had to go and till his own, and knew not how; so the land lay waste, and there was great perplexity.

Then I went down to them and said, "If you had hearkened to me, and not robbed your brethren of their land, you would never have come into this strait; for by this time the mountain would have been bored through."

Then they cursed the mountain, and me, and Him who made them, and came down to my cottage at night, and cried, "One-sided and left-handed! father of confusion, and disciple of dead donkeys, see to what thou hast

brought the land, with thy blasphemous doctrines! Here we are starving, and not only we, but the poor misguided victims of thy abominable notions!"

"You have become wondrous pitiful to the poor," said I, "since you found that they would not starve that you might wanton."

Then once more Lillian came to me, thin and pale, and worn. "See, I, too, am starving! and you have been the cause of it; but I will forgive all if you will help us but this once."

"How shall I help you?"

"You are a poet and an orator, and win over all hearts with your talk and your songs. Go down to the tribes of the plain, and persuade them to send us up warriors, that we may put down these riotous and idle wretches; and you shall be king of all the land, and I will be your slave, by day and night."

But I went out, and quarried steadfastly at the mountain.

And when I came back the next evening, the poor had risen against the rich, one and all, crying, "As you have done to us, so will we do to you;" and they hunted them down like wild beasts, and slew many of them, and threw their carcases on the dunghill, and took possession of their land and houses, and cried, "We will be all free and equal as our forefathers were, and live here, and eat and drink, and take our pleasure."

Then I ran out, and cried to them, "Fools! will you do as these rich did, and neglect the work of God? If you do to them as they have done to you, you will sin as they sinned, and devour each other at the last, as they devoured you. The old paths are best. Let each man, rich or poor, have his equal share of the land, as it was at first, and go up and dig through the mountain, and possess the good land beyond, where no man need jostle his neighbour, or rob him, when the land becomes too small for you. Were the rich only in fault? Did not you, too, neglect the work which the All-Father had given you, and run every man after his own comfort? So you entered into a lie, and by your own sin raised up

the rich man to be your punishment. For the last time, who will go up with me to the mountain?"

Then they all cried with one voice, "We have sinned! We will go up and pierce the mountain, and fulfil the work which God set to our forefathers."

We went up, and the first stroke that I struck a crag fell out; and behold, the light of day! and far below us the good land and large, stretching away boundless towards the western sun.

* * * * *

I sat by the cave's mouth at the dawning of the day. Past me the tribe poured down, young and old, with their waggons, and their cattle, their seeds, and their arms, as of old—yet not as of old—wiser and stronger, taught by long labour and sore affliction. Downward they streamed from the cave's mouth into the glens, following the guidance of the silver water-courses; and as they passed me, each kissed my hands and feet, and cried, "Thou hast saved us—thou hast given up all for us. Come and be our king!"

"Nay," I said, "I have been your king this many a year; for I have been the servant of you all."

I went down with them into the plain, and called them round me. Many times they besought me to go with them and lead them.

"No," I said, "I am old and grey-headed, and I am not as I have been. Choose out the wisest and most righteous among you, and let him lead you. But bind him to yourselves with an oath, that whenever he shall say to you, 'Stay here, and let us sit down and build, and dwell here for ever,' you shall cast him out of his office, and make him a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, and choose one who will lead you forwards in the spirit of God."

The crowd opened, and a woman came forward into the circle. Her face was veiled, but we all knew her for a prophetess. Slowly she stepped into the midst, chanting a mystic song. Whether it spoke of past, present, or future, we knew not; but it sank deep into all our hearts.

"'True freedom stands in meekness—
True strength in utter weakness—
Justice in forgiveness lies—
Riches in self-sacrifice—
Own no rank but God's own spirit—
Wisdom rule!—and worth inherit!
Work for all, and all employ—
Share with all, and all enjoy—
God alike to all has given,
Heaven as Earth, and Earth as Heaven,
When the land shall find her king again,
And the reign of God is come."

We all listened, awe-struck. She turned to us and continued:

"Hearken to me, children of Japhet, the unresting!

"On the holy mountain of Paradise, in the Asgard of the Hindoo-Koh, in the cup of the four rivers, in the womb of the mother of nations, in brotherhood, equality, and freedom, the sons of men were begotten, at the wedding of the heaven and the earth. Mighty infants, you did the right you knew not of, and sinned not, because there was no temptation. By selfishness you fell, and became beasts of prey. Each man coveted the universe for his own lusts, and not that he might fulfil in it God's command to people and subdue it. Long have you wandered—and long will you wander still. For here you have no abiding city. You shall build cities, and they shall crumble; you shall invent forms of society and religion, and they shall fail in the hour of need. You shall call the lands by your own names, and fresh waves of men shall sweep you forth, westward, westward ever, till you have travelled round the path of the sun, to the place from whence you came. For out of Paradise you went, and unto Paradise you shall return; you shall become once more as little children, and renew your youth like the eagle's. Feature by feature, and limb by limb, ye shall renew it; age after age, gradually and painfully, by hunger and pestilence, by superstitions and tyrannies, by need and blank despair, shall you be driven back to the All-Father's home, till you become as you were before you fell, and left the likeness of your father for the like-

ness of the beasts. Out of Paradise you came, from liberty, equality, and brotherhood, and unto them you shall return again. You went forth in unconscious infancy—you shall return in thoughtful manhood. You went forth in ignorance and need—you shall return in science and wealth, philosophy and art. You went forth with the world a wilderness before you—you shall return when it is a garden behind you. You went forth selfish-savages—you shall return as the brothers of the Son of God.

"And for you," she said, looking on me, "your penance is accomplished. You have learned what it is to be a man. You have lost your life and saved it. He that gives up house, or land, or wife, or child, for God's sake, it shall be repaid him an hundred-fold. Awake!"

Surely I knew that voice. She lifted her veil. The face was Lillian's? No!—Eleanor's!

Gently she touched my hand—I sank down into soft, weary happy sleep.

The spell was snapped. My fever and my dreams faded away together, and I woke to the twittering of the sparrows, and the scent of the poplar leaves, and the sights and sounds of childhood, and found Eleanor and her uncle sitting by my bed, and with them Crossthwaite's little wife.

I would have spoken, but Eleanor laid her finger on her lips, and taking her uncle's arm, glided from the room. Katie kept stubbornly a smiling silence, and I was fain to obey my new-found guardian angels.

What need of many words? Slowly, and with relapses into insensibility, I passed, like one who recovers from drowning, through the painful gate of birth into another life. The fury of passion had been replaced by a delicious weakness. The thunder-clouds had passed roaring down the wind, and the calm bright holy evening was come. My heart, like a fretful child, had stamped and wept itself to sleep. I was past even gratitude; infinite submission and humility, feelings too long forgotten, absorbed my whole being. Only I never dared meet Eleanor's eye. Her voice was like an angel's when she spoke to me—friend, mother, sister, all in one. But I

had a dim recollection of being unjust to her—of some bar between us.

Katie and Crossthwaite, as they sat by me, tender and careful nurses both, told me, in time, that to Eleanor I owed all my comforts. I could not thank her—the debt was infinite, inexplicable. I felt as if I must speak all my heart or none; and I watched her lavish kindness with a sort of sleepy, passive wonder, like a new-born babe.

At last, one day, my kind nurses allowed me to speak a little. I broached to Crossthwaite the subject which filled my thoughts. "How came I here? How came you here? and Lady Ellerton? What is the meaning of it all?"

"The meaning is, that Lady Ellerton, as they call her, is an angel out of heaven. Ah, Alton! she was your true friend, after all, if you had but known it, and not that other one at all."

I turned my head away.

"Whisht—howld then, Johnny darlint! and don't go tormenting the poor dear sowl, just when he's comin' round again."

"No, no! tell me all. I must—I ought—I deserve to bear it. How did she come here?"

"Why then, it's my belief, she had her eye on you ever since you came out of that Bastille, and before that, too; and she found you out at Mackaye's, and me with you, for I was there looking after you. If it hadn't been for your illness, I'd have been in Texas now, with our friends, for all's up with the Charter, and the country's too hot, at least for me. I'm sick of the whole thing together, patriots, aristocrats, and everybody else, except this blessed angel. And I've got a couple of hundred to emigrate with; and what's more, so have you."

"How's that?"

"Why, when poor dear old Mackaye's will was read, and you raving mad in the next room, he had left all his stock-in-trade, that was, the books, to some of our friends, to form a workmen's library with, and £400 he'd saved, to be parted between you and me, on condition

that we'll G. T. T., and cool down across the Atlantic, for seven years come the tenth of April."

So, then, by the lasting love of my adopted father, I was at present at least out of the reach of want! My heart was ready to overflow at my eyes; but I could not rest till I had heard more of Lady Ellerton. What brought her here, to nurse me as if she had been a sister?

"Why, then, she lives not far off by. When her husband died, his cousin got the estate and title, and so she came, Katie tells me, and lived for one year down somewhere in the East-end among the needlewomen; and spent her whole fortune on the poor, and never kept a servant, so they say, but made her own bed and cooked her own dinner, and got her bread with her own needle, to see what it was really like. And she learnt a lesson there, I can tell you, and God bless her for it. For now she's got a large house here by, with fifty or more in it, all at work together, sharing the earnings among themselves, and putting into their own pockets the profits which would have gone to their tyrants; and she keeps the accounts for them, and gets the goods sold, and manages everything, and reads to them while they work, and teaches them every day."

"And takes her victuals with them," said Katie, "share and share alike. She that was so grand a lady, to demane herself to the poor unfortunate young things! She's as blessed a saint as any a one in the Calendar, if they'll forgive me for saying so."

"Ay! demeaning, indeed! for the best of it is, they're not the respectable ones only, though she spends hundreds on them——"

"And sure, haven't I seen it with my own eyes, when I've been there charing?"

"Ay, but those she lives with are the fallen and the lost ones—those that the rich would not set up in business, or help them to emigrate, or lift them out of the gutter with a pair of tongs, for fear they should stain their own whitewash in handling them."

"And sure they're as dacent as meself now, the poor darlints! It was misery druv 'em to it, every one; per-

haps it might hav' druv me the same way, if I'd had lot o' childer, and Johnny gone to glory—and the blessed saints save him from that same at all at all!"

"What! from going to glory?" said John.

"Och, thin, and wouldn't I just go mad if ever such ill luck happened to yees as to be taken to heaven in the prime of your days, asthore?"

And she began sobbing and hugging and kissing the little man; and then suddenly recollecting herself, scolded him heartily for making such a "whillybaloo," and thrust him out of my room, to recommence kissing him in the next, leaving me to many meditations.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE TRUE DEMAGOGUE.

I USED to try to arrange my thoughts, but could not; the past seemed swept away and buried, like the wreck of some drowned land after a flood. Ploughed by affliction to the core, my heart lay fallow for every seed that fell. Eleanor understood me, and gently and gradually, beneath her skilful hand, the chaos began again to bloom with verdure. She and Crossthwaite used to sit and read to me—from the Bible, from poets, from every book which could suggest soothing, graceful, or hopeful fancies. Now out of the stillness of the darkened chamber, one or two priceless sentences of à Kempis, or a spirit-stirring Hebrew psalm, would fall upon my ear: and then there was silence again; and I was left to brood over the words in vacancy, till they became a fibre of my own soul's core. Again and again the stories of Lazarus and the Magdalene alternated with Milton's Penseroso, or with Wordsworth's tenderest and most solemn strains. Exquisite prints from the history of our Lord's life and death were hung one by one, each for a few days, opposite my bed, where they might catch my eye the moment that I woke, the moment before I fell asleep. I heard one day the good dean remonstrating with her on the "sentimentalism" of her mode of treatment.

"Poor drowned butterfly!" she answered, smiling, "he must be fed with honey-dew. Have I not surely had practice enough already?"

"Yes, angel that you are!" answered the old man. "You have indeed had practice enough!" And lifting

her hand reverentially to his lips, he turned and left the room.

She sat down by me as I lay, and began to read from Tennyson's Lotus-Eaters. But it was not reading—it was rather a soft dreamy chant, which rose and fell like the waves of sound on an Æolian harp.

"There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentler on the spirit lies
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone?
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings;
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm,
Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
'There is no joy but calm!'
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?"

She paused—

My soul was an enchanted boat
Which, like a sleeping swan, did float
Upon the silver waves of her sweet singing.

Half-unconscious, I looked up. Before me hung a copy of Raffaelle's cartoon of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes. As my eye wandered over it, it seemed to blend into harmony with the feelings which the poem had stirred. I seemed to float upon the glassy lake. I watched the vista of the waters and mountains, receding into the dreamy infinite of the still summer sky. Softly from distant shores came the hum of eager multitudes; towers and palaces slept quietly beneath the eastern sun. In

front, fantastic fishes, and the birds of the mountain and the lake, confessed His power, who sat there in His calm godlike beauty, His eye ranging over all that still infinity of His own works, over all that wondrous line of figures, which seemed to express every gradation of spiritual consciousness, from the dark self-condemned dislike of Judas's averted and wily face, through mere animal greediness to the first dawnings of surprise, and on to the manly awe and gratitude of Andrew's majestic figure, and the self-abhorrent humility of Peter, as he shrank down into the bottom of the skiff, and with convulsive palms and bursting brow seemed to press out from his inmost heart the words, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" Truly, pictures are the books of the unlearned, and of the mis-learned too. Glorious Raffaelle! Shakspeare of the South! Mighty preacher, to whose blessed intuition it was given to know all human hearts, to embody in form and colour all spiritual truths, common alike to Protestant and Papist, to workman and to sage—oh that I may meet thee before the throne of God, if it be but to thank thee for that one picture, in which thou didst reveal to me, in a single glance, every step of my own spiritual history!

She seemed to follow my eyes, and guess from them the workings of my heart; for now, in a low, half-abstracted voice, as Diotima may have talked of old, she began to speak of rest and labour, of death and life; of a labour which is perfect rest—of a daily death, which is but daily birth—of weakness, which is the strength of God; and so she wandered on in her speech to Him who died for us. And gradually she turned to me. She laid one finger solemnly on my listless palm, as her words and voice became more intense, more personal. She talked of Him, as Mary may have talked just risen from His feet. She spoke of Him as I had never heard Him spoken of before—with a tender passionate loyalty, kept down and softened by the deepest awe. The sense of her intense belief, shining out in every lineament of her face, carried conviction to my heart more than ten thousand arguments could do. It must be true!—Was not

the power of it around her like a glory? She spoke of Him as near us—watching us—in words of such vivid eloquence that I turned half-startled to her, as if I expected to see Him standing by her side.

She spoke of Him as the great Reformer; and yet as the true conservative; the inspirer of all new truths, revealing in His Bible to every age abysses of new wisdom, as the times require; and yet the vindicator of all which is ancient and eternal—the justifier of His own dealings with man from the beginning. She spoke of Him as the true demagogue—the champion of the poor; and yet as the true King, above and below all earthly rank; on whose will alone all real superiority of man to man, all the time-justified and time-honoured usages of the family, the society, the nation, stand and shall stand for ever.

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And then she changed her tone; and in a voice of infinite tenderness she spoke of Him as the Creator, the Word, the Inspirer, the only perfect Artist, the Fountain of all Genius.

She made me feel—would that His ministers had made me feel it before, since they say that they believe it—that He had passed victorious through my vilest temptations, that He sympathized with my every struggle.

She told me how He, in the first dawn of manhood, full of the dim consciousness of His own power, full of strange yearning presentiments about His own sad and glorious destiny, went up into the wilderness, as every youth, above all every genius, must, there to be tempted of the devil. She told how alone with the wild beasts, and the brute powers of nature, He saw into the open secret—the mystery of man's twofold life, His kingship over earth, His sonship under God: and conquered in the might of His knowledge. How He was tempted, like every genius, to use His creative powers for selfish ends—to yield to the lust of display and singularity, and break through those laws which He came to reveal and to fulfil—to do one little act of evil, that He might secure thereby the harvest of good which was the object of His

life: and how He had conquered in the faith that He was the Son of God. She told me how He had borne the sorrows of genius; how the slightest pang that I had ever felt was but a dim faint pattern of His; how He, above all men, had felt the agony of calumny, misconception, misinterpretation; how He had fought with bigotry and stupidity, casting His pearls before swine, knowing full well what it was to speak to the deaf and the blind; how He had wept over Jerusalem, in the bitterness of disappointed patriotism, when He had tried in vain to awaken within a nation of slavish and yet rebellious bigots the consciousness of their glorious calling. . . . .

It was too much—I hid my face in the coverlet, and burst out into long, low, and yet most happy weeping. She rose and went to the window, and beckoned Katie from the room within.

"I am afraid," she said, "my conversation has been too much for him."

"Showers sweeten the air," said Katie; and truly enough, as my own lightened brain told me.

Eleanor—for so I must call her now—stood watching me for a few minutes, and then glided back to the bedside, and sat down again.

"You find the room quiet?"

"Wonderfully quiet. The roar of the city outside is almost soothing, and the noise of every carriage seems to cease suddenly just as it becomes painfully near."

"We have had straw laid down," she answered, "all along this part of the street."

This last drop of kindness filled the cup to overflowing: a veil fell from before my eyes—it was she who had been my friend, my guardian angel, from the beginning!

"You—you—idiot that I have been! I see it all now. It was you who laid that paper to catch my eye on that first evening at D * * *!—you paid my debt to my cousin!—you visited Mackaye in his last illness!"

She made a sign of assent.

"You saw from the beginning my danger, my weakness!—you tried to turn me from my frantic and fruitless passion!—you tried to save me from the very gulf into

which I forced myself!—and I—I have hated you in return—cherished suspicions too ridiculous to confess, only equalled by the absurdity of that other dream!"

"Would that other dream have ever given you peace, even if it had ever become reality?"

She spoke gently, slowly, seriously; waiting between each question for the answer which I dared not give.

"What was it that you adored? a soul or a face? The inward reality or the outward symbol, which is only valuable as a sacrament of the loveliness within?"

"Ay!" thought I, "and was that loveliness within? What was that beauty but a hollow mask?" How barren, borrowed, trivial, every thought and word of hers seemed now, as I looked back upon them, in comparison with the rich luxuriance, the startling originality, of thought, and deed, and sympathy, in her who now sat by me, wan and faded, beautiful no more as men call beauty, but with the spirit of an archangel gazing from those clear, fiery eyes! And as I looked at her, an emotion utterly new to me arose; utter trust, delight, submission, gratitude, awe—if it was love, it was love as of a dog towards his master. . . . .

"Ay," I murmured, half unconscious that I spoke aloud, "her I loved, and love no longer; but you, you I worship, and for ever!"

"Worship God," she answered. "If it shall please you hereafter to call me friend, I shall refuse neither the name nor its duties. But remember always, that whatsoever interest I feel in you, and, indeed, have felt from the first time I saw your poems, I cannot give or accept friendship upon any ground so shallow and changeable as personal preference. The time was when I thought it a mark of superior intellect and refinement to be as exclusive in my friendships as in my theories. Now I have learnt that that is most spiritual and noble which is also most universal. If we are to call each other friends, it must be for a reason which equally includes the outcast and the profligate, the felon, and the slave."

"What do you mean?" I asked, half disappointed.

"Only for the sake of Him who died for all alike."

Why did she rise and call Crossthwaite from the next room where he was writing? Was it from the womanly tact and delicacy which feared lest my excited feelings might lead me on to some too daring expression, and give me the pain of a rebuff, however gentle; or was it that she wished him, as well as me, to hear the memorable words which followed, to which she seemed to have been all along alluring me, and calling up in my mind, one by one, the very questions to which she had prepared the answers?

"That name!" I answered. "Alas! has it not been in every age the watchword, not of an all-embracing charity, but of self-conceit and bigotry, excommunication and persecution?"

"That is what men have made it; not God, or He who bears it, the Son of God. Yes, men have separated from each other, slandered each other, murdered each other in that name, and blasphemed it by that very act. But when did they unite in any name but that? Look all history through—from the early churches, unconscious and infantile ideas of God's kingdom, as Eden was of the human race, when love alone was law, and none said that aught that he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common—Whose name was the bond of unity for that brotherhood, such as the earth had never seen—when the Roman lady and the Negro slave partook together at the table of the same bread and wine, and sat together at the feet of the Syrian tent-maker?—'One is our Master, even Christ, who sits at the right hand of God, and in Him we are all brothers.' Not self-chosen preference for His precepts, but the overwhelming faith in His presence, His rule, His love, bound those rich hearts together. Look onward, too, at the first followers of St. Bennet and St. Francis, at the Cameronians among their Scottish hills, or the little persecuted flock who in a dark and godless time gathered around Wesley by pit mouths and on Cornish cliffs—Look, too, at the great societies of our own days, which, however imperfectly, still lovingly and earnestly do their measure of God's work at home and abroad; and say, when was there ever

real union, co-operation, philanthropy, equality, brotherhood, among men, save in loyalty to Him—Jesus, who died upon the cross?"

And she bowed her head reverently before that unseen Majesty; and then looked up at us again—Those eyes, now brimming full of earnest tears, would have melted stonier hearts than ours that day.

"Do you not believe me? Then I must quote against you one of your own prophets—a ruined angel—even as you might have been.

"When Camille Desmoulins, the revolutionary, about to die, as is the fate of such, by the hands of revolutionaries, was asked his age, he answered, they say, that it was the same as that of the 'bon sans-culotte Jesus.' I do not blame those who shrink from that speech as blasphemous. I, too, have spoken hasty words and hard, and prided myself on breaking the bruised reed, and quenching the smoking flax. Time was when I should have been the loudest in denouncing poor Camille; but I have long since seemed to see in those words the distortion of an almighty truth—a truth that shall shake thrones, and principalities, and powers, and fill the earth with its sound, as with the trump of God; a prophecy like Balaam's of old—'I shall see Him, but not nigh; I shall behold Him, but not near.' . . . . . Take all the heroes, prophets, poets, philosophers—where will you find the true demagogue—the speaker to man simply as man—the friend of publicans and sinners, the stern foe of the scribe and the Pharisee—with whom was no respect of persons—where is he? Socrates and Plato were noble; Zerdusht and Confutzee, for aught we know, were nobler still; but what were they but the exclusive mystagogues of an enlightened few, like our own Emersons and Strausses, to compare great with small? What gospel have they, or Strauss, or Emerson, for the poor, the suffering, the oppressed? The People's Friend? Where will you find him, but in Jesus of Nazareth?"

"We feel that; I assure you, we feel that," said Crossthwaite. "There are thousands of us who delight in His moral teaching, as the perfection of human excellence."

"And what gospel is there in a moral teaching? What good news is it to the savage of St. Giles, to the artizan, crushed by the competition of others and his own evil habits, to tell him that he can be free—if he can make himself free?—That all men are his equals—if he can rise to their level, or pull them down to his?—All men his brothers—if he can only stop them from devouring him, or making it necessary for him to devour them? Liberty, equality, and brotherhood? Let the history of every nation, of every revolution—let your own sad experience speak—have they been aught as yet but delusive phantoms—angels that turned to fiends the moment you seemed about to clasp them? Remember the tenth of April, and the plots thereof, and answer your own hearts!"

Crossthwaite buried his face in his hands.

"What!" I answered, passionately, "will you rob us poor creatures of our only faith, our only hope on earth? Let us be deceived, and deceived again, yet we will believe! We will hope on in spite of hope. We may die, but the idea lives for ever. Liberty, equality, and fraternity must come. We know, we know, that they must come; and woe to those who seek to rob us of our faith!"

"Keep, keep your faith," she cried; "for it is not yours, but God's, who gave it! But do not seek to realize that idea for yourselves."

"Why, then, in the name of reason and mercy?"

"Because it is realized already for you. You are free; God has made you free. You are equals—you are brothers; for He is your king who is no respecter of persons. He is your king, who has bought for you the rights of sons of God. He is your king, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth; who reigns, and will reign, till He has put all enemies under His feet. That was Luther's charter,—with that alone he freed half Europe. That is your charter, and mine; the everlasting ground of our rights, our mights, our duties, of ever-gathering storm for the oppressor, of ever-brightening sunshine for the oppressed. Own no

other. Claim your investiture as free men from none but God. His will, His love, is a stronger ground, surely, than abstract rights and ethnological opinions. Abstract rights? What ground, what root have they, but the ever-changing opinions of men, born anew and dying anew with each fresh generation?—while the word of God stands sure—'You are mine, and I am yours, bound to you in an everlasting covenant.'

"Abstract rights? They are sure to end, in practice, only in the tyranny of their father—opinion. In favoured England here, the notions of abstract right among the many are not so incorrect, thanks to three centuries of Protestant civilization; but only because the right notions suit the many at this moment. But in America, even now, the same ideas of abstract right do not interfere with the tyranny of the white man over the black. Why should they? The white man is handsomer, stronger, cunninger, worthier than the black. The black is more like an ape than the white man—he is—the fact is there; and no notions of an abstract right will put that down: nothing but another fact—a mightier, more universal fact—Jesus of Nazareth died for the negro as well as for the white. Looked at apart from Him, each race, each individual of mankind, stands separate and alone, owing no more brotherhood to each other than wolf to wolf, or pike to pike—himself a mighter beast of prey—even as he has proved himself in every age. Looked at as he is, as joined into one family in Christ, his archetype and head, even the most frantic declamations of the French democrat, about the majesty of the people, the divinity of mankind, become rational, reverent, and literal. God's grace outrivals all man's boasting—'I have said, ye are gods, and ye are all the children of the Most Highest:'—'children of God, members of Christ, of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,'—'kings and priests to God,'—free inheritors of the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of prudence and courage, of reverence and love, the spirit of Him who has said, 'Behold, the days come, when I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and no one shall teach his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for

all shall know Him, from the least even unto the greatest. Ay, even on the slaves and on the handmaidens in those days will I pour out my spirit, saith the Lord!'"

"And that is really in the Bible?" asked Crossthwaite.

"Ay"—she went on, her figure dilating, and her eyes flashing, like an inspired prophetess—"that is in the Bible! What would you more than that? That is your charter; the only ground of all charters. You, like all mankind, have had dim inspirations, confused yearnings after your future destiny, and, like all the world from the beginning, you have tried to realize, by self-willed methods of your own, what you can only do by God's inspiration, by God's method. Like the builders of Babel in old time, you have said, 'Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top shall reach to heaven'—And God has confounded you as he did them. By mistrust, division, passion, and folly, you are scattered abroad. Even in these last few days, the last dregs of your late plot have exploded miserably and ludicrously—your late companions are in prison, and the name of Chartist is a laughing-stock as well as an abomination."

"Good Heavens! Is this true?" asked I, looking at Crossthwaite for confirmation.

"Too true, dear boy, too true: and if it had not been for these two angels here, I should have been in Newgate now!"

"Yes," she went on. "The Charter seems dead, and liberty further off than ever."

"That seems true enough, indeed," said I, bitterly.

"Yes. But it is because Liberty is God's beloved child, that He will not have her purity sullied by the touch of the profane. Because He loves the people, He will allow none but Himself to lead the people. Because He loves the people, He will teach the people by afflictions. And even now, while all this madness has been destroying itself, He has been hiding you in His secret place from the strife of tongues, that you may have to look for a state founded on better things than acts of parliament, social contracts, and abstract rights—a city whose found-

ations are in the eternal promises, whose builder and maker is God."

She paused.—"Go on, go on," cried Crossthwaite and I in the same breath.

"That state, that city, Jesus said, was come—was now within us, had we eyes to see. And it is come. Call it the church, the gospel, civilization, freedom, democracy, association, what you will—I shall call it by the name by which my Master spoke of it—the name which includes all these, and more than these—the kingdom of God. 'Without observation,' as he promised, secretly, but mightily, it has been growing, spreading, since that first Whitsuntide; civilizing, humanizing, uniting this distracted earth. Men have fancied they found it in this system or in that, and in them only. They have cursed it in its own name, when they found it too wide for their own narrow notions. They have cried, 'Lo here!' and 'Lo there!' 'To this communion!' or 'To that set of opinions.' But it has gone its way—the way of Him who made all things, and redeemed all things to Himself. In every age it has been a gospel to the poor, In every age it has, sooner or later, claimed the steps of civilization, the discoveries of science, as God's inspirations, not man's inventions. In every age, it has taught men to do that by God which they had failed in doing without Him. It is now ready, if we may judge by the signs of the times, once again to penetrate, to convert, to reorganize, the political and social life of England, perhaps of the world; to vindicate democracy as the will and gift of God. Take it for the ground of your rights. If, henceforth, you claim political enfranchisement, claim it not as mere men, who may be villains, savages, animals, slaves of their own prejudices and passions; but as members of Christ, children of God, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, and therefore bound to realize it on earth. All other rights are mere mights—mere selfish demands to become tyrants in your turn. If you wish to justify your Charter, do it on that ground. Claim your share in national life, only because the nation is a spiritual body, whose king is the Son of God; whose work, whose national character and

powers, are allotted to it by the Spirit of Christ. Claim universal suffrage, only on the ground of the universal redemption of mankind—the universal priesthood of Christians. That argument will conquer, when all have failed; for God will make it conquer. Claim the disenfranchisement of every man, rich or poor, who breaks the laws of God and man, not merely because he is an obstacle to you, but because he is a traitor to your common King in heaven, and to the spiritual kingdom of which he is a citizen. Denounce the effete idol of property-qualification, not because it happens to strengthen class interests against you, but because, as your mystic dream reminded you, and, therefore, as you knew long ago, there is no real rank, no real power, but worth; and worth consists not in property, but in the grace of God. Claim, if you will, annual parliaments, as a means of enforcing the responsibility of rulers to the Christian community, of which they are to be, not the lords, but the ministers—the servants of all. But claim these, and all else for which you long, not from man, but from God, the King of men. And therefore, before you attempt to obtain them, make yourselves worthy of them—perhaps by that process you will find some of them have become less needful. At all events, do not ask, do not hope, that He will give them to you before you are able to profit by them. Believe that he has kept them from you hitherto, because they would have been curses, and not blessings. Oh! look back, look back, at the history of English Radicalism for the last half century, and judge by your own deeds, your own words; were you fit for those privileges which you so frantically demanded? Do not answer me, that those who had them were equally unfit; but thank God, if the case be indeed so, that your incapacity was not added to theirs, to make confusion worse confounded! Learn a new lesson. Believe at last that you are in Christ, and become new creatures. With those miserable, awful farce tragedies of April and June, let old things pass away, and all things become new. Believe that your kingdom is not of this world, but of One whose servants must not fight. He that believeth,

as the prophet says, will not make haste. Beloved suffering brothers! are not your times in the hand of One who loved you to the death, who conquered, as you must do, not by wrath, but by martyrdom? Try no more to meet Mammon with his own weapons, but commit your cause to Him who judges righteously, who is even now coming out of His place to judge the earth, and to help the fatherless and poor unto their right, that the man of the world may be no more exalted against them—the poor man of Nazareth, crucified for you!"

She ceased, and there was silence for a few moments, as if angels were waiting, hushed, to carry our repentance to the throne of Him we had forgotten.

Crossthwaite had kept his face fast buried in his hands; now he looked up with brimming eyes—

"I see it—I see it all now. Oh, my God! my God! what infidels we have been!"

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CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MIRACLES AND SCIENCE.

SUNRISE, they say, often at first draws up and deepens the very mists which it is about to scatter: and even so, as the excitement of my first conviction cooled, dark doubts arose to dim the new-born light of hope and trust within me. The question of miracles had been ever since I had read Strauss my greatest stumbling-block—perhaps not unwillingly, for my doubts pampered my sense of intellectual acuteness and scientific knowledge; and "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." But now that they interfered with nobler, more important, more immediately practical ideas, I longed to have them removed—I longed even to swallow them down on trust—to take the miracles "into the bargain" as it were, for the sake of that mighty gospel of deliverance for the people which accompanied them. Mean subterfuge! which would not, could not, satisfy me. The thing was too precious, too all-important, to take one tittle of it on trust. I could not bear the consciousness of one hollow spot—the nether fires of doubt glaring through, even at one little crevice. I took my doubts to Lady Ellerton—Eleanor, as I must now call her, for she never allowed herself to be addressed by her title—and she referred me to her uncle—

"I could say somewhat on that point myself. But since your doubts are scientific ones, I had rather that you should discuss them with one whose knowledge of such subjects you, and all England with you, must revere."

"Ah, but—pardon me; he is a clergyman."

"And therefore bound to prove, whether he believes in his own proof or not. Unworthy suspicion!" she cried, with a touch of her old manner. "If you had known that man's literary history for the last thirty years, you would not suspect him, at least, of sacrificing truth and conscience to interest, or to fear of the world's insults."

I was rebuked; and not without hope and confidence, I broached the question to the good dean when he came in—as he happened to do that very day.

"I hardly like to state my difficulties," I began—"for I am afraid that I must hurt myself in your eyes by offending your—prejudices, if you will pardon so plain-spoken an expression."

"If," he replied, in his bland courtly way, "I am so unfortunate as to have any prejudices left, you cannot do me a greater kindness than by offending them—or by any other means, however severe—to make me conscious of the locality of such a secret canker."

"But I am afraid that your own teaching has created, or at least corroborated, these doubts of mine."

"How so?"

"You first taught me to revere science. You first taught me to admire and trust the immutable order, the perfect harmony of the laws of Nature."

"Ah! I comprehend now!" he answered, in a somewhat mournful tone—"How much we have to answer for! How often, in our carelessness, we offend those little ones, whose souls are precious in the sight of God! I have thought long and earnestly on the very subject which now distresses you; perhaps every doubt which has passed through your mind, has exercised my own; and, strange to say, you first set me on that new path of thought. A conversation which passed between us years ago at D * * * * on the antithesis of natural and revealed religion—perhaps you recollect it?"

Yes, I recollected it better than he fancied, and recollected too—I thrust the thought behind me—it was even yet intolerable.

"That conversation first awoke in me the sense of an hitherto unconscious inconsistency—a desire to reconcile

two lines of thought—which I had hitherto considered as parallel, and impossible to unite. To you, and to my beloved niece here, I owe gratitude for that evening's talk; and you are freely welcome to all my conclusions, for you have been, indirectly, the originator of them all."

"Then, I must confess, that miracles seem to me impossible, just because they break the laws of Nature. Pardon me—but there seems something blasphemous in supposing that God can mar His own order: His power I do not call in question, but the very thought of His so doing is abhorrent to me."

"It is as abhorrent to me as it can be to you, to Goethe, or to Strauss; and yet I believe firmly in our Lord's miracles."

"How so, if they break the laws of Nature?"

"Who told you, my dear young friend, that to break the customs of Nature, is to break her laws? A phenomenon, an appearance, whether it be a miracle or a comet, need not contradict them because it is rare, because it is as yet not referable to them. Nature's deepest laws, her only true laws, are her invisible ones. All analyses (I think you know enough to understand my terms), whether of appearances, of causes, or of elements, only lead us down to fresh appearances—we cannot see a law, let the power of our lens be ever so immense. The true causes remain just as impalpable, as unfathomable as ever, eluding equally our microscope and our induction—ever tending towards some great primal law, as Mr. Grove has well shown lately in his most valuable pamphlet—some great primal law, I say, manifesting itself, according to circumstances, in countless diverse and unexpected forms—till all that the philosopher as well as the divine can say, is—the Spirit of Life, impalpable, transcendental, direct from God, is the only real cause. 'It bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth.' What, if miracles should be the orderly result of some such deep, most orderly, and yet most spiritual law?"

"I feel the force of your argument, but——"

"But you will confess, at least, that you, after the fashion of the crowd, have begun your argument by begging the very question in dispute, and may have, after all, created the very difficulty which torments you."

"I confess it; but I cannot see how the miracles of Jesus—of our Lord—have anything of order in them."

"Tell me, then—to try the Socratic method—is disease, or health, the order and law of Nature!"

"Health, surely; we all confess that by calling diseases disorders."

"Then, would one who healed diseases be a restorer, or a breaker of order?"

"A restorer, doubtless; but——

"Like a patient scholar, and a scholarly patient, allow me to 'exhibit' my own medicines according to my own notion of the various crises of your distemper. I assure you I will not play you false, or entrap you by quips and special pleading. You are aware that our Lord's miracles were almost exclusively miracles of healing—restorations of that order of health which disease was breaking—that when the Scribes and Pharisees, superstitious and sense-bound, asked him for a sign from heaven, a contra-natural prodigy, he refused them as peremptorily as he did the fiend's 'Command these stones that they be made bread.' You will quote against me the water turned into wine, as an exception to this rule. St. Augustine answered that objection centuries ago, by the same argument as I am now using. Allow Jesus to have been the Lord of Creation, and what was he doing then, but what he does in the maturing of every grape—transformed from air and water even as that wine in Cana? Goethe, himself, unwittingly, has made Mephistopheles even say as much as that—

> Wine is sap, and grapes are wood,
> The wooden board yields wine as good."

"But the time?—so infinitely shorter than that which Nature usually occupies in the process?"

"Time and space are no Gods, as a wise German says; and as the electric telegraph ought already to have taught you. They are customs, but who has proved them to be

laws of Nature? No; analyse these miracles one by one, fairly, carefully, scientifically, and you will find that if you want prodigies really blasphemous and absurd, infractions of the laws of Nature, amputated limbs growing again, and dead men walking away with their heads under their arms, you must go to the Popish legends, but not to the miracles of the Gospels. And now for your 'but'——"

"The raising of the dead to life? Surely death is the appointed end of every animal—ay, of every species, and of man among the rest."

"Who denies it? But is premature death?—the death of Jairus's daughter, of the widow's son at Nain, the death of Jesus himself, in the prime of youth and vigour—or rather that gradual decay of ripe old age, through which I now, thank God, so fast am travelling? What nobler restoration of order, what clearer vindication of the laws of Nature from the disorder of diseases, than to recall the dead to their natural and normal period of life?"

I was silent a few moments, having nothing to answer; then—

"After all, these may have been restorations of the law of Nature. But why was the law broken in order to restore it? The Tenth of April has taught me, at least, that disorder cannot cast disorder out."

"Again I ask, why do you assume the very point in question? Again I ask, who knows what really are the laws of Nature? You have heard Bacon's golden rule—'Nature is conquered by obeying her?'"

"I have."

"Then who more likely, who more certain, to fulfil that law to hitherto unattained perfection, than He who came to obey, not outward nature merely, but, as Bacon meant, the inner ideas, the spirit of Nature, which is the will of God?—He who came to do utterly, not His own will, but the will of the Father who sent Him? Who is so presumptuous as to limit the future triumphs of science? Surely no one who has watched her giant strides during the last century. Shall Stephenson and

Faraday, and the inventors of the calculating machine, and the electric telegraph, have fulfilled such wonders by their weak and partial obedience to the 'Will of God expressed in things'—and He who obeyed, even unto the death, have possessed no higher power than theirs?"

"Indeed," I said, "your words stagger me. But there is another old objection which they have reawakened in my mind. You will say I am shifting my ground sadly. But you must pardon me"

"Let us hear. They need not be irrelevant. The unconscious logic of association is often deeper and truer than any syllogism."

"These modern discoveries in medicine seem to show that Christ's miracles may be attributed to natural causes."

"And thereby justify them. For what else have I been arguing. The difficulty lies only in the rationalist's shallow and sensuous view of Nature, and in his ambiguous, slip-slop trick of using the word natural to mean, in one sentence, 'material,' and in the next, as I use it, only 'normal and orderly.' Every new wonder in medicine which this great age discovers—what does it prove, but that Christ need have broken no natural laws to do that of old, which can be done now without breaking them—if you will but believe that these gifts of healing are all inspired and revealed by Him who is the Great Physician, the Life, the Lord of that vital energy by whom all cures are wrought.

"The surgeons of St. George's make the boy walk who has been lame from his mother's womb. But have they given life to a single bone or muscle of his limbs? They have only put them into that position—those circumstances in which the God-given life in them can have its free and normal play, and produce the cure which they only assist. I claim that miracle of science, as I do all future ones, as the inspiration of Him who made the lame to walk in Judea, not by producing new organs, but by His creative will—quickening and liberating those which already existed

"The mesmerist, again, says that he can cure a spirit

of infirmity, an hysteric or paralytic patient, by shedding forth on them his own vital energy; and, therefore he will have it, that Christ's miracles were but mesmeric feats. I grant, for the sake of argument, that he possesses the power which he claims; though I may think his facts too new, too undigested, often too exaggerated, to claim my certain assent. But, I say, I take you on your own ground; and, indeed, if man be the image of God, his vital energy may, for aught I know, be able, like God's, to communicate some spark of life—But then, what must have been the vital energy of Him who was the life itself; who was filled without measure with the spirit, not only of humanity, but with that of God the Lord and Giver of life? Do but let the Bible tell its own story; grant, for the sake of argument, the truth of the dogmas which it asserts throughout, and it becomes a consistent whole. When a man begins, as Strauss does, by assuming the falsity of its conclusions, no wonder if he finds its premises a fragmentary chaos of contradictions."

"And what else?" asked Eleanor, passionately—"what else is the meaning of that highest human honour, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but a perennial token that the same life-giving spirit is the free right of all?"

And thereon followed happy, peaceful, hopeful words, which the reader, if he call himself a Christian, ought to be able to imagine for himself. I am afraid that writing from memory, I should do as little justice to them as I have to the dean's arguments in this chapter. Of the consequences which they produced in me, I will speak anon.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

NEMESIS.

It was a month or more before I summoned courage to ask after my cousin.

Eleanor looked solemnly at me.

"Did you not know it? He is dead."

"Dead!" I was almost stunned by the announcement.

"Of typhus fever. He died three weeks ago; and not only he, but the servant who brushed his clothes, and the shopman, who had a few days before, brought him a new coat home."

"How did you learn all this?"

"From Mr. Crossthwaite. But the strangest part of the sad story is to come. Crossthwaite's suspicions were aroused by some incidental circumstance, and knowing of Downes's death, and the fact that you most probably caught your fever in that miserable being's house, he made such inquiries as satisfied him that it was no other than your cousin's coat——"

"Which covered the corpses in that fearful chamber?"

"It was indeed."

Just, awful God. And this was the consistent Nemesis of all poor George's thrift and cunning, of his determination to carry the buy-cheap-and-sell-dear commercialism, in which he had been brought up, into every act of life! Did I rejoice? No; all revenge, all spite had been scourged out of me. I mourned for him as for a brother, till the thought flashed across me—Lillian was free. Half unconscious, I stammered her name inquiringly.

"Judge for yourself," answered Eleanor, mildly, yet with a deep, severe meaning in her tone.

I was silent.

* * * * *

The tempest in my heart was ready to burst forth again; but she, my guardian angel, soothed it for me.

"She is much changed; sorrow and sickness—for she, too, has had the fever, and, alas! less resignation or peace within, than those who love her would have wished to see—have worn her down. Little remains now of that loveliness——"

"Which I idolized in my folly!"

"Thank God, thank God! that you see that at last: I knew it all along. I knew that there was nothing there for your heart to rest upon—nothing to satisfy your intellect—and, therefore, I tried to turn you from your dream. I did it harshly, angrily, too sharply, yet not explicitly enough. I ought to have made allowances for you. I should have known how enchanting, intoxicating, mere outward perfections must have been to one of your perceptions, shut out so long as you had been from the beautiful in art and nature. But I was cruel. Alas! I had not then learnt to sympathize; and I have often since felt with terror that I, too, may have many of your sins to answer for; that I, even I, helped to drive you on to bitterness and despair."

"Oh, do not say so! You have done to me, meant to me, nothing but good."

"Be not too sure of that. You little know me. You little know the pride which I have fostered—even the mean anger against you, for being the protégé of any one but myself. That exclusiveness, and shyness, and proud reserve, is the bane of our English character—it has been the bane of mine—daily I strive to root it out. Come—I will do so now. You wonder why I am here. You shall hear somewhat of my story; and do not fancy that I am showing you a peculiar mark of honour or confidence. If the history of my life can be of use to the meanest, they are welcome to the secrets of my inmost heart.

"I was my parents' only child, an heiress, highly born, and highly educated. Every circumstance of humanity which could pamper pride was mine, and I battened on the poison. I painted, I sang, I wrote in prose and verse—they told me, not without success. Men said that I was beautiful—I knew that myself, and revelled and gloried in the thought. Accustomed to see myself the centre of all my parents' hopes and fears, to be surrounded by flatterers, to indulge in secret the still more fatal triumph of contempt for those I thought less gifted than myself, self became the centre of my thoughts. Pleasure was all I thought of. But not what the vulgar call pleasure. That I disdained, while, like you, I worshipped all that was pleasurable to the intellect and the taste. The beautiful was my God. I lived, in deliberate intoxication, on poetry, music, painting, and every anti-type of them which I could find in the world around. At last I met with—one whom you once saw. He first awoke in me the sense of the vast duties and responsibilities of my station—his example first taught me to care for the many rather than for the few. It was a blessed lesson: yet even that I turned to poison, by making self, still self, the object of my very benevolence. To be a philanthropist, a philosopher, a feudal queen, amid the blessings and the praise of dependent hundreds—that was my new ideal; for that I turned the whole force of my intellect to the study of history, of social and economic questions. From Bentham and Malthus to Fourier and Proudhon, I read them all. I made them all fit into that idol-temple of self which I was rearing, and fancied that I did my duty, by becoming one of the great ones of the earth. My ideal was not the crucified Nazarene, but some Hairoun Alraschid, in luxurious splendour, pampering his pride by bestowing as a favour those mercies which God commands as the right of all. I thought to serve God, forsooth, by serving Mammon and myself. Fool that I was! I could not see God's handwriting on the wall against me. 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven!' . . . . .

"You gave me, unintentionally, a warning hint. The capabilities which I saw in you made me suspect that those below might be more nearly my equals than I had yet fancied. Your vivid descriptions of the misery among whole classes of workmen—misery caused and ever increased by the very system of society itself—gave a momentary shock to my fairy palace. They drove me back upon the simple old question, which has been asked by every honest heart, age after age, 'What right have I to revel in luxury while thousands are starving? Why do I pride myself on doling out to them small fractions of that wealth, which, if sacrificed utterly and at once, might help to raise hundreds to a civilization as high as my own?' I could not face the thought; and angry with you for having awakened it, however unintentionally, I shrank back behind the pitiable, worn-out fallacy, that luxury was necessary to give employment. I knew that it was a fallacy; I knew that the labour spent in producing unnecessary things for one rich man may just as well have gone in producing necessaries for a hundred poor, or employ the architect and the painter for public bodies as well as private individuals. That even for the production of luxuries, the monopolizing demand of the rich was not required—that the appliances of real civilization, the landscapes, gardens, stately rooms, baths, books, pictures, works of art, collections of curiosities, which now went to pamper me alone—me, one single human soul—might be helping, in an associate society, to civilize a hundred families, now debarred from them by isolated poverty, without robbing me of an atom of the real enjoyment or benefit of them. I knew it, I say, to be a fallacy, and yet I hid behind it from the eye of God. Besides, 'it always had been so—the few rich, and the many poor. I was but one more among millions.'"

She paused a moment as if to gather strength, and then continued:

"The blow came. My idol—for he, too, was an idol—To please him I had begun—To please myself in pleasing him, I was trying to become great—and with him went from me that sphere of labour which was to witness the triumph

of my pride. I saw the estate pass into other hands; a mighty change passed over me, as impossible, perhaps, as unfitting, for me to analyse. I was considered mad. Perhaps I was so: there is a divine insanity, a celestial folly, which conquers worlds. At least, when that period was past, I had done, and suffered so strangely, that nothing henceforth could seem strange to me. I had broken the yoke of custom and opinion. My only ground was now the bare realities of human life and duty. In poverty and loneliness I thought out the problems of society, and seemed to myself to have found the one solution—self-sacrifice. Following my first impulse, I had given largely to every charitable institution I could hear of—God forbid that I should regret those gifts—yet the money, I soon found, might have been better spent. One by one, every institution disappointed me; they seemed, after all, only means for keeping the poor in their degradation, by making it just not intolerable to them—means for enabling Mammon to draw fresh victims into his den, by taking off his hands those whom he had already worn out into uselessness. Then I tried association among my own sex—among the most miserable and degraded of them. I simply tried to put them into a position in which they might work for each other, and not for a single tyrant; in which that tyrant's profits might be divided among the slaves themselves. Experienced men warned me that I should fail; that such a plan would be destroyed by the innate selfishness and rivalry of human nature; that it demanded what was impossible to find, good faith, fraternal love, overruling moral influence. I answered, that I knew that already; that nothing but Christianity alone could supply that want, but that it could and should supply it; that I would teach them to live as sisters, by living with them as their sister myself. To become the teacher, the minister, the slave of those whom I was trying to rescue, was now my one idea; to lead them on, not by machinery, but by precept, by example, by the influence of every gift and talent which God had bestowed upon me; to devote to them my enthusiasm, my eloquence, my poetry, my

art, my science; to tell them who had bestowed their gifts on me, and would bestow, to each according to her measure, the same on them; to make my workrooms, in one word, not a machinery, but a family. And I have succeeded—as others will succeed, long after my name, my small endeavours, are forgotten amid the great new world—new Church I should have said—of enfranchised and fraternal labour."

And this was the suspected aristocrat! Oh, my brothers, my brothers! little you know how many a noble soul, among those ranks which you consider only as your foes, is yearning to love, to help, to live and die for you, did they but know the way! Is it their fault if God has placed them where they are? Is it their fault, if they refuse to part with their wealth, before they are sure that such a sacrifice would really be a mercy to you? Show yourselves worthy of association. Show that you can do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God, as brothers before one Father, subjects of one crucified King—and see then whether the spirit of self-sacrifice is dead among the rich! See whether there are not left in England yet seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Mammon, who will not fear to "give their substance to the free," if they find that the Son has made you free—free from your own sins, as well as from the sins of others!

CHAPTER XL.

PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.

"But after all," I said one day, "the great practical objection still remains unanswered—the clergy? Are we to throw ourselves into their hands after all? Are we, who have been declaiming all our lives against priestcraft, voluntarily to forge again the chains of our slavery to a class whom we neither trust nor honour?"

She smiled. "If you will examine the Prayer-Book, you will not find, as far as I am aware, anything which binds a man to become the slave of the priesthood, voluntarily or otherwise. Whether the people become priest-ridden or not, hereafter, will depend, as it always has done, utterly on themselves. As long as the people act upon their spiritual liberty, and live with eyes undimmed by superstitious fear, fixed in loving boldness on their Father in heaven, and their King, the first-born among many brethren, the priesthood will remain, as God intended them, only the interpreters and witnesses of His will and His kingdom. But let them turn their eyes from Him to aught in earth or heaven beside, and there will be no lack of priestcraft, of veils to hide Him from them, tyrants to keep them from Him, idols to ape His likeness. A sinful people will be sure to be a priest-ridden people; in reality, though not in name; by journalists and demagogues, if not by class-leaders and popes: and of the two, I confess I should prefer a Hildebrand to an O'Flynn."

"But," I replied, "we do not love, we do not trust, we do not respect the clergy. Has their conduct to the

masses for the last century deserved that we should do so? Will you ask us to obey the men whom we despise?"

"God forbid!" she answered. "But you must surely be aware of the miraculous, ever-increasing improvement in the clergy."

"In morals," I said, "and in industry, doubtless; but not upon those points which are to us just now dearer than their morals or their industry, because they involve the very existence of our own industry and our own morals—I mean, social and political subjects. On them the clergy seem to me as ignorant, as bigoted, as aristocratic as ever."

"But, suppose that there were a rapidly-increasing class among the clergy, who were willing to help you to the uttermost—and you must feel that their help would be worth having—towards the attainment of social reform, if you would waive for a time merely political reform?"

"What?" I said, "give up the very ideas for which we have struggled, and sinned, and all but died? and will struggle, and, if need be, die for still, or confess ourselves traitors to the common weal?"

"The Charter, like its supporters, must die to itself before it lives to God. Is it not even now farther off than ever?"

"It seems so indeed—but what do you mean?"

"You regarded the Charter as an absolute end. You made a selfish and a self-willed idol of it. And therefore God's blessing did not rest on it or you."

"We want it as a means as well as an end—as a means for the highest and widest social reform, as well as a right dependent on eternal justice."

"Let the working classes prove that, then," she replied, "in their actions now. If it be true, as I would fain believe it to be, let them show that they are willing to give up their will to God's will; to compass those social reforms by the means which God puts in their way, and wait for His own good time to give them, or not to give them, those means which they in their own minds prefer. This

is what I meant by saying that Chartism must die to itself before it has a chance of living to God. You must feel, too, that Chartism has sinned—has defiled itself in the eyes of the wise, the good, the gentle. Your only way now to soften the prejudice against it is to show that you can live like men and brothers and Christians without it. You cannot wonder if the clergy shall object awhile to help you towards that Charter, which the majority of you demanded for the express purpose of destroying the creed which the clergy do believe, however badly they may have acted upon it."

"It is all true enough—bitterly true. But yet, why do we need the help of the clergy?"

"Because you need the help of the whole nation; because there are other classes to be considered beside yourselves; because the nation is neither the few nor the many, but the all; because it is only by the co-operation of all the members of a body, that any one member can fulfil its calling in health and freedom; because, as long as you stand aloof from the clergy, or from any other class, through pride, self-interest, or wilful ignorance, you are keeping up those very class distinctions of which you and I too complain, as 'hateful equally to God and to his enemies;' and, finally, because the clergy are the class which God has appointed to unite all others; which, in as far as it fulfils its calling, and is indeed a priesthood, is above and below all rank, and knows no man after the flesh, but only on the ground of his spiritual worth, and his birthright in that kingdom which is the heritage of all."

"Truly," I answered, "the idea is a noble one—But look at the reality! Has not priestly pandering to tyrants made the Church, in every age, a scoff and a byword among free men?"

"May it ever do so," she replied, "whenever such a sin exists! But yet, look at the other side of the picture. Did not the priesthood, in the first ages, glory not in the name, but, what is better, in the office, of democrats? Did not the Roman tyrants hunt them down as wild beasts, because they were democrats, proclaiming to the

slave and to the barbarian a spiritual freedom and a heavenly citizenship, before which the Roman well knew his power must vanish into naught? Who, during the invasion of the barbarians, protected the poor against their conquerors? Who, in the middle age, stood between the baron and his serfs? Who, in their monasteries, realized spiritual democracy,—the nothingness of rank and wealth, the practical might of co-operation and self-sacrifice? Who delivered England from the Pope? Who spread throughout every cottage in the land the Bible and Protestantism, the book and the religion which declares that a man's soul is free in the sight of God? Who, at the martyr's stake in Oxford, 'lighted the candle in England that shall never be put out?' Who, by suffering, and not by rebellion, drove the last perjured Stuart from his throne, and united every sect and class in one of the noblest steps in England's progress? You will say these are the exceptions; I say nay; they are rather a few great and striking manifestations of an influence which has been, unseen though not unfelt, at work for ages, converting, consecrating, organizing, every fresh invention of mankind, and which is now on the eve of christianizing democracy, as it did Mediæval Feudalism, Tudor Nationalism, Whig Constitutionalism; and which will succeed in christianizing it, and so alone making it rational, human, possible; because the priesthood alone, of all human institutions, testifies of Christ the King of men, the Lord of all things, the inspirer of all discoveries; who reigns, and will reign, till He has put all things under His feet, and the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ. Be sure, as it always has been, so will it be now. Without the priesthood there is no freedom for the people. Statesmen know it; and, therefore, those who would keep the people fettered, find it necessary to keep the priesthood fettered also. The people never can be themselves without co-operation with the priesthood; and the priesthood never can be themselves without co-operation with the people. They may help to make a sect-Church for the rich, as they have been doing, or a sect-Church for

paupers (which is also the most subtle form of a sect-Church for the rich), as a party in England are trying now to do—as I once gladly would have done myself: but if they would be truly priests of God, and priests of the Universal Church, they must be priests of the people, priests of the masses, priests after the likeness of Him who died on the cross."

"And are there any men," I said, "who believe this? and, what is more, have courage to act upon it, now in the very hour of Mammon's triumph?"

"There are those who are willing, who are determined, whatever it may cost them, to fraternize with those whom they take shame to themselves for having neglected; to preach and to organize, in concert with them, a Holy War against the social abuses which are England's shame; and, first and foremost, against the fiend of competition. They do not want to be dictators to the working men. They know that they have a message to the artizan, but they know, too, that the artizan has a message to them; and they are not afraid to hear it. They do not wish to make him a puppet for any system of their own; they only are willing, if he will take the hand they offer him, to devote themselves, body and soul, to the great end of enabling the artizan to govern himself; to produce in the capacity of a free man, and not of a slave; to eat the food he earns, and wear the clothes he makes. Will your working brothers co-operate with these men? Are they, do you think, such bigots as to let political differences stand between them and those who fain would treat them as their brothers; or will they fight manfully side by side with them in the battle against Mammon, trusting to God, that if in anything they are otherwise minded, He will, in His own good time, reveal even that unto them? Do you think, to take one instance, the men of your own trade would heartily join a handful of these men in an experiment of associate labour, even though there should be a clergyman or two among them?"

"Join them?" I said. "Can you ask the question? I, for one, would devote myself, body and soul, to any enter-

prise so noble. Crossthwaite would ask for nothing higher, than to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water to an establishment of associate workmen. But, alas! his fate is fixed for the New World; and mine, I verily believe, for sickness and the grave. And yet I will answer for it, that, in the hopes of helping such a project, he would give up Mackaye's bequest, for the mere sake of remaining in England; and for me, if I have but a month of life, it is at the service of such men as you describe."

"Oh!" she said, musingly, "if poor Mackaye had but had somewhat more faith in the future, that fatal condition would perhaps never have been attached to his bequest. And yet, perhaps, it is better as it is. Crossthwaite's mind may want quite, as much as yours does, a few years of a simpler and brighter atmosphere to soften and refresh it again. Besides, your health is too weak, your life, I know, too valuable to your class, for us to trust you on such a voyage alone. He must go with you."

"With me?" I said. "You must be misinformed; I have no thought of leaving England."

"You know the opinion of the physicians?"

"I know that my life is not likely to be a long one; that immediate removal to a southern, if possible to a tropical climate, is considered the only means of preserving it. For the former I care little; *non est tanti vivere.* And, indeed, the latter, even if it would succeed, is impossible. Crossthwaite will live and thrive by the labour of his hands; while, for such a helpless invalid as I to travel, would be to dissipate the little capital which Mackaye has left me.

"The day will come, when society will find it profitable, as well as just, to put the means of preserving life by travel within the reach of the poorest. But individuals must always begin by setting the examples, which the state too slowly, though surely (for the world is God's world after all), will learn to copy. All is arranged for you. Crossthwaite, you know, would have sailed ere now, had it not been for your fever. Next

week you start with him for Texas. No; make no objections. All expenses are defrayed—no matter by whom."

"By you! By you! Who else?"

"Do you think that I monopolize the generosity of England? Do you think warm hearts beat only in the breasts of working men? But, if it were I, would not that be only another reason for submitting? You must go. You will have, for the next three years, such an allowance as will support you in comfort, whether you choose to remain stationary, or, as I hope, to travel southward into Mexico. Your passage-money is already paid."

Why should I attempt to describe my feelings? I gasped for breath, and looked stupidly at her for a minute or two.—The second darling hope of my life within my reach, just as the first had been snatched from me! At last I found words.

"No, no, noble lady! Do not tempt me! Who am I, the slave of impulse, useless, worn out in mind and body, that you should waste such generosity upon me? I do not refuse from the honest pride of independence; I have not man enough left in me even for that. But will you, of all people, ask me to desert the starving suffering thousands, to whom my heart, my honour are engaged; to give up the purpose of my life, and pamper my fancy in a luxurious paradise, while they are slaving here?"

"What? Cannot God find champions for them when you are gone? Has he not found them already? Believe me, that Tenth of April, which you fancied the death-day of liberty, has awakened a spirit in high as well as in low life, which children yet unborn will bless."

"Oh, do not mistake me! Have I not confessed my own weakness? But if I have one healthy nerve left in me, soul or body, it will retain its strength only as long as it thrills with devotion to the people's cause. If I live, I must live among them, for them. If I die, I must die at my post. I could not rest, except in labour. I dare not fly, like Jonah, from the call of God. In the deepest shade of the virgin forests, on the loneliest peak of the Cordilleras, He would find me out; and I should

hear His still small voice reproving me, as it reproved the fugitive patriot-seer of old—What doest thou here, Elijah?"

I was excited, and spoke, I am afraid, after my custom, somewhat too magniloquently. But she answered only with a quiet smile:

"So you are a Chartist still?"

"If by a Chartist you mean one who fancies that a change in mere political circumstances will bring about a millenium, I am no longer one. That dream is gone—with others. But if to be a Chartist is to love my brothers with every faculty of my soul—to wish to live and die struggling for their rights, endeavouring to make them, not electors merely, but fit to be electors, senators, kings, and priests to God and to His Christ—if that be the Chartism of the future, then am I sevenfold a Chartist, and ready to confess it before men, though I were thrust forth from every door in England."

She was silent a moment.

"'The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.' Surely the old English spirit has cast its madness, and begins to speak once more as it spoke in Naseby fights and Smithfield fires!"

"And yet you would quench it in me amid the enervating climate of the tropics."

"Need it be quenched there? Was it quenched in Drake, in Hawkins, in the conquerors of Hindostan? Weakness, like strength, is from within, of the spirit, and not of sunshine. I would send you thither, that you may gain new strength, new knowledge to carry out your dream and mine. Do not refuse me the honour of preserving you. Do not forbid me to employ my wealth in the only way which reconciles my conscience to the possession of it. I have saved many a woman already; and this one thing remained—the highest of all my hopes and longings—that God would allow me, ere I die, to save a man. I have longed to find some noble soul, as Carlyle says, fallen down by the wayside, and lift it up, and heal its wounds, and teach it the secret of its heavenly birthright, and consecrate it to its King in

heaven. I have longed to find a man of the people, whom I could train to be the poet of the people."

"Me, at least, you have saved, have taught, have trained! Oh that your care had been bestowed on some more worthy object!"

"Let me, at least, then, perfect my own work. You do not—it is a sign of your humility that you do not—appreciate the value of this rest. You underrate at once your own powers, and the shock which they have received."

"If I must go, then, why so far? Why put you to so great expense? If you must be generous, send me to some place nearer home—to Italy, to the coast of Devon, or the Isle of Wight, where invalids like me are said to find all the advantages which are so often, perhaps too hastily, sought in foreign lands."

"No," she said, smiling; "you are my servant now, by the laws of chivalry, and you must fulfil my quest. I have long hoped for a tropic poet; one who should leave the routine imagery of European civilization, its meagre scenery, and physically decrepit races, for the grandeur, the luxuriance, the infinite and strongly-marked variety of tropic nature, the paradisiac beauty and simplicity of tropic humanity. I am tired of the old images; of the barren alternations between Italy and the Highlands. I had once dreamt of going to the tropics myself; but my work lay elsewhere. Go for me, and for the people. See if you cannot help to infuse some new blood into the aged veins of English literature; see if you cannot, by observing man in his mere simple and primeval state, bring home fresh conceptions of beauty, fresh spiritual and physical laws of his existence, that you may realize them here at home—(how, I see as yet but dimly; but He who teaches the facts will surely teach their application)—in the cottages, in the play-grounds, the reading-rooms, the churches of working men."

"But I know so little—I have seen so little!"

"That very fact, I flatter myself, gives you an especial vocation for my scheme. Your ignorance of cultivated English scenery, and of Italian art, will enable you to

approach with a more reverend, simple, and unprejudiced eye the primeval forms of beauty—God's work, not man's. Sin you will see there, and anarchy, and tyranny, but I do not send you to look for society, but for nature. I do not send you to become a barbarian settler, but to bring home to the realms of civilization those ideas of physical perfection, which as yet, alas! barbarism, rather than civilization, has preserved. Do not despise your old love for the beautiful. Do not fancy that because you have let it become an idol and a tyrant, it was not therefore the gift of God. Cherish it, develop it to the last; steep your whole soul in beauty; watch it in its most vast and complex harmonies, and not less in its most faint and fragmentary traces. Only, hitherto you have blindly worshipped it; now you must learn to comprehend, to master, to embody it; to show it forth to men as the sacrament of Heaven, the finger-mark of God!"

Who could resist such pleading from those lips? I at least could not.

CHAPTER XLI.

FREEDOM, EQUALITY, AND BROTHERHOOD.

BEFORE the same Father, the same King, crucified for all alike, we had partaken of the same bread and wine, we had prayed for the same spirit. Side by side, around the chair on which I lay propped up with pillows, coughing my span of life away, had knelt the high-born countess, the cultivated philosopher, the repentant rebel, the wild Irish girl, her slavish and exclusive creed exchanged for one more free and all-embracing; and that no extremest type of human condition might be wanting, the reclaimed Magdalene was there—two pale worn girls from Eleanor's asylum, in whom I recognized the needlewomen to whom Mackaye had taken me, on a memorable night, seven years before. Thus—and how better?—had God rewarded their loving care of that poor dying fellow-slave.

Yes—we had knelt together: and I had felt that we were one—that there was a bond between us, real, eternal, independent of ourselves, knit not by man, but God; and the peace of God, which passes understanding, came over me like the clear sunshine after weary rain.

One by one they shook me by the hand, and quitted the room; and Eleanor and I were left alone.

"See!" she said, "Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood are come; but not as you expected."

Blissful, repentant tears blinded my eyes, as I replied, not to her, but to Him who spoke by her—

"Lord! not as I will, but as thou wilt!"

"Yes," she continued, "Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood are here. Realize them in thine own self, and so

alone thou helpest to make them realities for all. Not from without, from Charters and Republics, but from within, from the Spirit working in each; not by wrath and haste, but by patience made perfect through suffering, canst thou proclaim their good news to the groaning masses, and deliver them, as thy Master did before thee, by the cross, and not the sword. Divine paradox!—Folly to the rich and mighty—the watchword of the weak, in whose weakness is God's strength made perfect. 'In your patience possess ye your souls, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.' Yes—He came then, and the Babel-tyranny of Rome fell, even as the more fearful, more subtle, and more diabolic tyranny of Mammon shall fall ere long—suicidal, even now crumbling by its innate decay. Yes—Babylon the Great—the commercial world of selfish competition, drunken with the blood of God's people, whose merchandise is the bodies and souls of men—her doom is gone forth. And then—then—when they, the tyrants of the earth, who lived delicately with her, rejoicing in her sins, the plutocrats and bureaucrats, the money-changers and devourers of labour, are crying to the rocks to hide them, and to the hills to cover them, from the wrath of Him that sitteth on the throne—then labour shall be free at last, and the poor shall eat and be satisfied, with things that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, but which God has prepared for those who love Him. Then the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, and mankind at last shall own their King—Him in whom they are all redeemed into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, and He shall reign indeed on earth, and none but His saints shall rule beside Him. And then shall this sacrament be an everlasting sign to all the nations of the world, as it has been to you this day, of freedom, equality, brotherhood, of Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good-will toward men. Do you believe?"

Again I answered, not her, but Him who sent her—

"Lord, I believe! Help thou mine unbelief!"

"And now farewell. I shall not see you again before

you start—and ere you return—My health has been fast declining lately."

I started—I had not dared to confess to myself how thin her features had become of late. I had tried not to hear the dry and hectic cough, or see the burning spot on either cheek—but it was too true; and with a broken voice I cried:

"Oh that I might die, and join you!"

"Not so—I trust that you have still a work to do. But if not, promise me that, whatever be the event of your voyage, you will publish, in good time, an honest history of your life; extenuating nothing, exaggerating nothing, ashamed to confess or to proclaim nothing. It may perhaps awaken some rich man to look down and take pity on the brains and hearts more noble than his own, which lie struggling, in poverty and misguidance among these foul sties, which civilization rears—and calls them cities. Now, once again, farewell!"

She held out her hand—I would have fallen at her feet; but the thought of that common sacrament withheld me. I seized her hand, covered it with adoring kisses—Slowly she withdrew it, and glided from the room——

What need of more words? I obeyed her—sailed—and here I am.

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Yes! I have seen the land! Like a purple fringe upon the golden sea, "while parting day dies like the dolphin," there it lay upon the fair horizon—the great young free new world! and every tree, and flower, and insect on it new!—a wonder and a joy—which I shall never see. . . . .

No,—I shall never reach the land. I felt it all along. Weaker and weaker, day by day, with bleeding lungs and failing limbs, I have travelled the ocean paths. The iron has entered too deeply into my soul. . . . . .

Hark! Merry voices on deck are welcoming their

future home. Laugh on, happy ones!—come out of Egypt and the house of bondage, and the waste and howling wilderness of slavery and competition, workhouses and prisons, into a good land and large, a land flowing with milk and honey, where you will sit every one under his own vine and his own fig-tree, and look into the faces of your rosy children—and see in them a blessing and not a curse! Oh, England! stern mother-land, when wilt thou renew thy youth?—Thou wilderness of man's making, not God's! . . . . . Is it not written, that the days shall come when the forest shall break forth into singing, and the wilderness shall blossom like the rose?

Hark! again, sweet and clear, across the still night sea, ring out the notes of Crossthwaite's bugle—the first luxury, poor fellow, he ever allowed himself; and yet not a selfish one, for music, like mercy, is twice blessed—

"It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

There is the spirit-stirring marching air of the German workmen students

Thou, thou, thou, and thou,
Sir Master, fare thee well.—

Perhaps a half reproachful hint to the poor old England he is leaving. What a glorious metre! warming one's whole heart into life and energy! If I could but write in such a metre one true people's song, that should embody all my sorrow, indignation, hope—fitting last words for a poet of the people—for they will be my last words——Well—thank God! at least I shall not be buried in a London churchyard! It may be a foolish fancy—but I have made them promise to lay me up among the virgin woods, where, if the soul ever visits the place of its body's rest, I may snatch glimpses of that natural beauty from which I was barred out in life, and watch the gorgeous flowers that bloom above my dust, and hear the forest birds sing around the Poet's grave.

Hark to the grand lilt of the "Good Time Coming!"—Song which has cheered ten thousand hearts; which has

already taken root, that it may live and grow for ever—fitting melody to soothe my dying ears! Ah! how should there not be A Good Time Coming?—Hope, and trust, and infinite deliverance!—a time such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive!—coming surely, soon or late, to those for whom a God did not disdain to die!

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Our only remaining duty is to give an extract from a letter written by John Crossthwaite, and dated

"GALVESTON, TEXAS, *October*, 1848.

* * * * "I am happy. Katie is happy. There is peace among us here, like 'the clear downshining after rain.' But I thirst and long already for the expiration of my seven years' exile, wholesome as I believe it to be. My only wish is to return and assist in the Emancipation of Labour, and give my small aid in that fraternal union of all classes which I hear is surely, though slowly, spreading in my mother-land.

"And now for my poor friend, whose papers, according to my promise to him, I transmit to you. On the very night on which he seems to have concluded them—an hour after we had made the land—we found him in his cabin, dead, his head resting on the table as peacefully as if he had slumbered. On a sheet of paper by him were written the following verses; the ink was not yet dry:

"'MY LAST WORDS.

I.

"'Weep, weep, weep, and weep,
For pauper, dolt, and slave;
Hark! from wasted moor and fen,
Feverous alley, workhouse den,
Swells the wail of Englishmen:
"Work! or the grave!"

II.

"'Down, down, down, and down,
With idler, knave, and tyrant;
Why for sluggards stint and moil
He that will not live by toil
Has no right on English soil;
God's word's our warrant!

III.

"'Up, up, up, and up,
Face your game, and play it!
The night is past—behold the sun!—
The cup is full, the web is spun,
The Judge is set, the doom begun;
Who shall stay it?'"

THE END.

ROBERT MACLEHOSE, PRINTER, GLASGOW.

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